









# POTTERY OF COSTA RICA AND NICARAGUA

BY

SAMUEL KIRKLAND LOTHROP

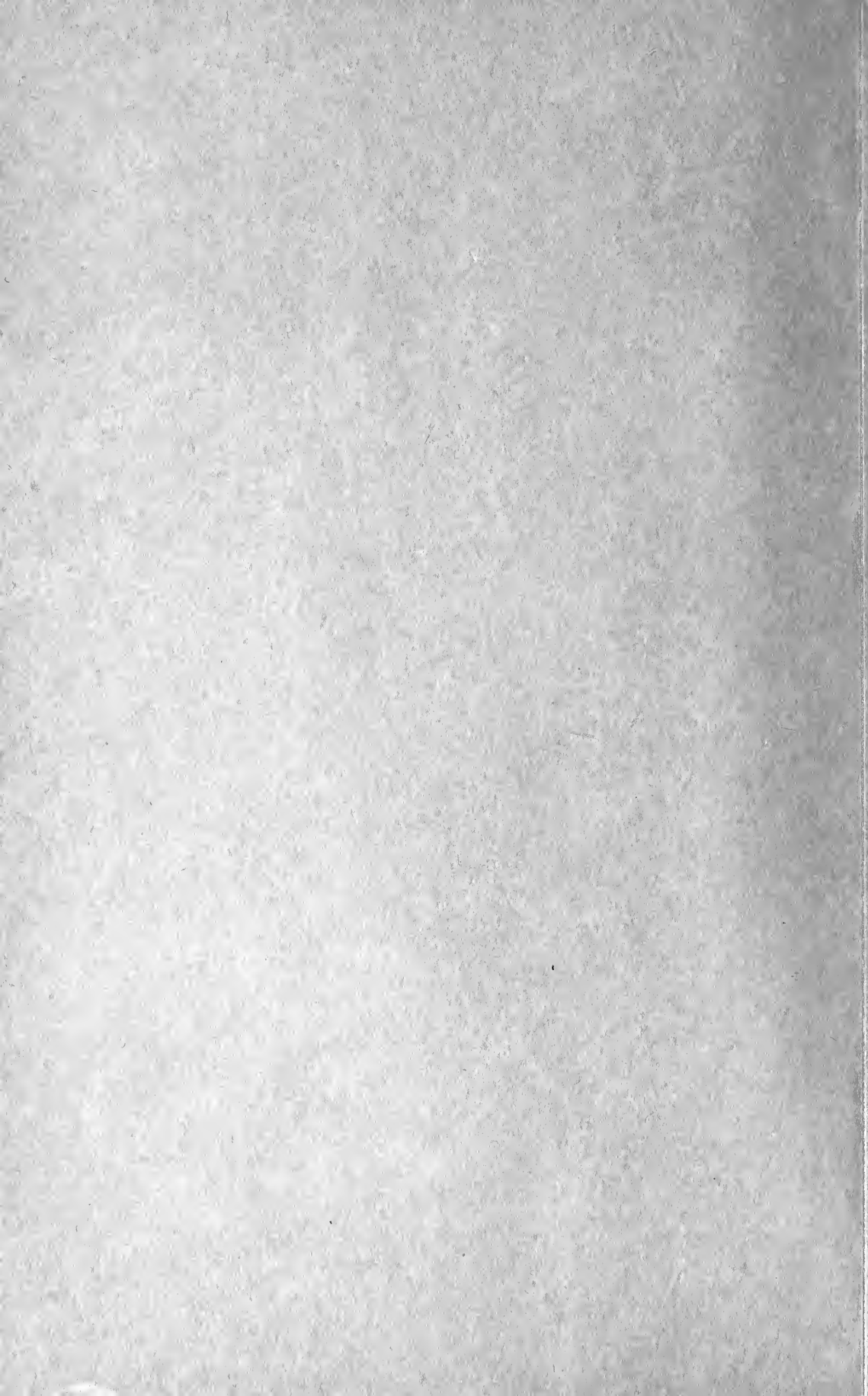


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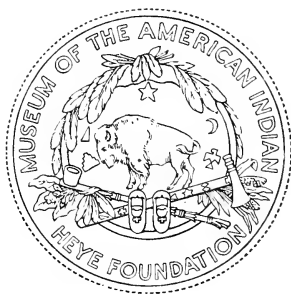
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All specimens not otherwise acknowledged are in the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation. The following abbreviations are used:

AMNH, American Museum of Natural History.  
 BM, British Museum.  
 \*CMP, Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh.  
 CRNM, Museo Nacional de Costa Rica.  
 PM, Peabody Museum, Harvard University.  
 USNM, United States National Museum.

In reproductions from pen drawings the colors are indicated by the following scheme of shading:



Red



Orange



Purple



Brown



Blue



Black

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## PREFACE

THIS study of the pottery of southern Central America is the result of fifteen months' residence in Costa Rica and Nicaragua and of inspection of the principal collections in both America and Europe—with the exception of those in Sweden, Germany, and Austria, which are partly available through publications. While it was planned originally to cover only the polychrome pottery of the Pacific coast, owing to the generous assistance of Mr. George G. Heye the scope has been widened to include all types of ceramic remains from Costa Rica and Nicaragua, except material from the southern border of the former, which has been thoroughly discussed and well illustrated by Holmes and MacCurdy.

In Part I of this work will be found a discussion of the distribution of linguistic stocks and tribes, together with a thorough résumé of early historical notices covering material culture, manners and customs, and religion. Part II is devoted to the archeology of the Pacific area is defined below, and that of the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua. The general archeological features are discussed and the pottery is treated in detail. Part III covers the Highland area and southern Costa Rica in similar fashion. The results of these studies are brought together in Part IV. In appendices will be found a list of sites with brief descriptions, translations of important Spanish documents, manuscript notes on excavations in northeastern Costa Rica by the late Alanson Skinner, and a bibliography.

A word must be said about the method of treating the pottery. The material presented has been gathered from many museums and private collections, and its bulk is very great. Perhaps as many as 35,000 or 40,000 specimens have been inspected by the writer. From this great mass a careful classification of wares and types has been made, and illustrations—in color when possible—have been prepared to cover all important types and their variants. The first aim has been, then, to gather a body of material and so to arrange it that it will be readily available for the use of future students. Secondly, an attempt has been made to trace geographical distribution of each form. Finally, a close study has been made of the decorative motives with a view of tracing interrelations both within and beyond the area discussed.

A large part of the material was presented to Harvard University in 1921 as a thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Since then it has been considerably rewritten and I have tried to incorporate the most recently published literature.

It is needless to say that a book of this kind can be produced only with the aid and coöperation of many people. Museums have opened their cases for me, and curators have not only made it possible to draw and photograph, but have given me generously of their ideas, while important private collections have been placed at my disposal. To all who have helped I extend my most sincere thanks not only for their aid but also for the pleasant and profitable days spent in their presence.

At the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, I am indebted to the entire staff who one and all have helped me in various ways. Mr. George G. Heye has given me constant encouragement and financially has made publication possible. Prof. M. H. Saville has made accessible his splendid library and has allowed me to reproduce his photographs. Mr. F. W. Hodge has not only edited the manuscript but has given me much advice during its preparation. Mr. Alanson Skinner, whose untimely death occurred so recently, allowed me to use the manuscript notes on his work in Costa Rica which are published in part as Appendix IV. Mr. W. C. Orchard has helped me in the laborious task of assembling the illustrations.

Both the Museum and myself are indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Minor C. Keith for the vast Costa Rican collection now housed in the Museum. I am also grateful for the opportunity to inspect the important collection still retained in their home.

In Costa Rica Don Anastasio Alfaro placed the collections in the Museo Nacional at my disposal, and Don Gerardo Peña gave much practical help. Also, for permission to draw and photograph their collections I am indebted to Don Luís Anderson, Mr. Frank N. Cox, Dr. Fidel Tristán, Doña María Fernández de Tinoco, Doña Angélica Baldioceda, and Dr. Louis Shapiro. Mr. John M. Keith I thank for much kindly advice, and also Mr. G. P. Chittenden, Mr. John Saxe, Mr. A. R. de la Croix, and Father José María Velásco.

At the Peabody Museum of Harvard University Prof. A. M. Tozzer made accessible the archeological collections and the important manuscript material left by Flint; through his hands as chairman of

the Department of Anthropology passed the manuscript of this work, and I am grateful to him for many suggestions. Mr. S. J. Guernsey gave me much help in handling specimens and in photography. Dr. J. Glover Allen of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy kindly identified the animal forms found in the pottery, a task for which he is singularly well qualified as a result of his study of animals portrayed in Maya codices.

In Washington, at the National Museum, Mr. W. H. Holmes most generously gave me all of his material on Costa Rica, including drawings prepared long ago for a study of the archeology of northern Costa Rica, which most unfortunately he had never completed. Mr. Neil M. Judd helped me greatly and allowed me to share his room for many pleasant weeks. I am indebted to Mr. S. G. Morley of the Carnegie Institution of Washington for permission to publish several photographs. Dr. W. E. Safford of the Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, has been kind enough to identify the plant forms appearing in the pottery.

At the Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh Dr. W. J. Holland allowed me to use part of the large collection brought together by Dr. C. V. Hartman. Mr. L. W. Jenkins of the Peabody Museum of Salem has furnished me with photographs of gold and pottery. Dr. P. E. Goddard of the American Museum of Natural History permitted drawings to be made from some of the specimens in the Keith collection on loan in that institution.

Dr. A. V. Kidder has helped me greatly in developing the terminology used herein and in working out some of the design series. Professor Berry of Johns Hopkins University kindly identified fossilized leaves from Nicaragua. My wife, Rachel Warren Lothrop, has given me constant help in all stages of preparing the manuscript.

In England Mr. T. A. Joyce opened for me the cases of the British Museum, allowed me to make drawings, and presented me with photographs. I am further indebted to him and to Mr. Henry Balfour of the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford for the opportunity to discuss with them much of the material herein presented. In Rome Dr. Ugo Antonielli permitted me to photograph specimens in the *Musei Preistorico ed Etnografico*, and similar privileges were granted me at the *Museo Arqueológico* in Madrid.

In addition I have examined collections in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston,

the University Museum in Philadelphia, the Museo Etnográfico in Buenos Aires, the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, the Groton School Museum, as well as specimens in Paris, Leyden, Oxford, Salisbury, and Liverpool. However, it has not been possible to incorporate material from these institutions in the present work.

The illustrations have been prepared for the greater part by Mr. William Baake, whose skill and accuracy it is unnecessary to point out. In addition, Mr. Rudolf Weber, Mr. Sidney Prentice, and I have contributed drawings. The color plates have been prepared by Mr. Baake and myself.

Acknowledgment of individual specimens has not been made beneath the illustrations because it seems desirable to make the titles as simple as possible. However, the present location of every vessel will be found in the list of plates and the list of text figures.

S. K. LOTHROP

New York,  
*October, 1925*

## INTRODUCTION

POTTERY, for the student of prehistoric peoples, occupies a unique position because it is produced by all races and tribes except those in the most elementary stages of culture. Although fragile in the extreme, few products of human handiwork are less easily obliterated in the ground. Furthermore, the ease with which clay is modeled results in the impress of the race and of the individual upon every specimen, while the difficulty of transporting the finished vessel makes it possible to identify the makers' habitat. "These fictile products," writes Holmes, "broken and scattered broadcast over all habitable lands, are gathered and hoarded by the archeologist, and their adventitious records are deciphered with a fulness and clearness second only to that attained in the reading of written records."

New World archeology has been placed on a new and sound basis in recent years through the discovery of stratification of the products of multiple occupancy of the same site. As a result, problems of chronology today are engrossing the attention of the student, and, for the solution of these, pottery is the master-key.

The partial decipherment of the Maya hieroglyphic system has also opened new vistas to those interested in the pre-European history of the Americas. Through ceramics and other objects passed in trade by the Maya, we hope to be able ultimately to date the contiguous cultures with the help of the exact calendar employed by that people.

Ceramic collections from Costa Rica and Nicaragua, from the point of view of quantity, are among the most important in the New World. The specimens themselves exhibit an esthetic development, primitive, if you will, but displaying pronounced taste in the use of line and color. The pottery of this region gains further importance from the fact that within the boundaries of these republics falls the southern frontier of Maya influence. If Maya chronology is ever to be extended into South America, the fictile products of Costa Rica and Nicaragua must prove the connecting link.

The region to be discussed includes the present republics of Costa Rica and Nicaragua, countries which were formerly the two southern provinces of the Audiencia and Captain-Generality of Guate-

mala. Geologically the formation of these lands has been changed by the recent uplift of a great line of volcanoes. In Nicaragua the volcanic chain, lying near the Pacific littoral, has caused the impounding of the great lakes of Managua and Nicaragua, the waters of which are imprisoned between the mountains forming the old continental divide and the recently-created Pacific coast. The region of the lakes, although overhung by mountains, is low, dusty or muddy according to the season, but extremely productive. Indeed the Spanish conquerors, when they first viewed the wealth and luxury of the aboriginal population, called it Mahomet's Paradise. But in no part of the New World was Spanish contact with the native races more destructive, hence few if any pure-blood Indians survive in this part of the country.

The central portion of Nicaragua consists of the Cordilleras which once formed the continental backbone, but which now are cut by the San Juan river and the overflow from the great lakes. Confined by these mountains is a series of plateaus which occupy most of the departments of Chontales, Matagalpa, and Segovia. To the eastward lie ranges of hills, which ultimately merge into the plains and swamps of the Atlantic littoral, usually known as the Mosquito coast.

South of the Nicaraguan lake region, in Costa Rica, the great chain of volcanoes parallels the Pacific coast for some distance, then swings eastward, and finally parallels the Atlantic coast as far south as the borders of Panama. Bounded by this range and the Pacific lies the Province of Guanacaste, which is separated from Nicaragua by a series of escarpments projecting like giant fingers from the volcanic line. The northern part of Guanacaste is a plain with a thin soil lying on volcanic débris; it is tilted up toward the Pacific, so that it drains southward into the Gulf of Nicoya. This gulf is formed by the Peninsula of Nicoya which creates an almost completely land-locked body of water. The southern portion of the peninsula is mountainous, but to the north a series of rolling hills and broad valleys finally merge into the plains of Guanacaste.

East of the Gulf of Nicoya is a coastal belt, for the greater part swampy, behind which the mountains rise abruptly, furrowed by long, upsloping valleys. Farther east the traveler emerges on a great tableland embracing the valleys of Alajuela, San José, and Cartago, to the north of which stands the volcanic chain already alluded to. These valleys, with their temperate climate and fertile soil, have always

been the center of population in Costa Rica from aboriginal times to the present day.

Passing eastward again one encounters a series of deep cañons where various streams cut the rim of the Cartago plateau, and finally emerge on the broad flood-plains which form the Atlantic coast. These plains were thickly settled in aboriginal times, but today are covered by dense jungle which is beginning to yield to the attack of civilization.

The southern part of the country is but little known. The Cordilleras and the continental divide, after extending due east from the Pacific littoral, turn southward midway between the two oceans. All the way to the borders of Panama the mountains exceed 10,000 feet in height and are practically uninhabited. On each coast are flood-plains of varying width, but for the greater part they are narrow.

To consider the archeological remains of this great region, it is necessary to divide it into several parts. This is not an easy task, because large areas are unknown archeologically, and even when adequate collections exist, they are not often accompanied with adequate data. Furthermore, the aboriginal divisions of southern Central America do not correspond to the modern political boundaries, hence a new nomenclature is requisite.

An examination of specimens shows that a single archeological area is embraced by the Pacific coast of Nicaragua, including the lake shores and the western slopes of the Cordilleras, together with the northwestern portion of Costa Rica, including the shores of the Gulf of Nicoya. The chief inhabitants were various Chorotegan tribes, but we shall call it the *Pacific area* rather than the Chorotegan, because other tribes dwelt within it and because Chorotegans also lived in Honduras and



FIG. 1.—Archeological areas of Nicaragua and Costa Rica

Mexico. The northern boundary of the Pacific area we draw at Fonseca bay, the southern at the Point of Herradura on the south side of the Gulf of Nicoya. The eastern limit follows the crest of the mountains between the Nicaraguan lakes and the North sea, and extends thence across Costa Rica to Herradura point in a line yet to be exactly determined (fig. 1).

The Atlantic coast of Nicaragua is archeological *terra incognita*, from which few artifacts are known; hence we shall have little to say concerning it.

To the west of Nicaragua lies Honduras, containing several cultural units, of which Chorotegan is apparently the oldest, as it underlies the great Maya city of Copan. Old Empire Maya remains (third to seventh century A. D.) occur also along the length of the Guatemala-Honduras border, in the Ulua valley, and in Salvador. Maya remains of the centuries just before the conquest are found along the western half of the Atlantic littoral. Central Honduras, especially the Comayagua valley, was occupied by various Lencan tribes. The ruins of their cities, of which the largest probably was Tenampua, show some Maya influence, some Chorotegan influence, and strong Mexican influence dating probably from the time of the Toltec ascendancy.

Turning now to Costa Rica we find that the Chiriqui culture, best known through specimens from Panama, occupied the southern half of the country. The central part of Costa Rica, the great *meseta central*, composed of high mountains and the enclosed valleys, is today the most thickly inhabited part of the country, and its archeology is well known. This district we call the *Highland area*. Bounded on the south by the Cordillera de la Candelaria and on the north by the great volcanoes of Poás, Barba, Irazú, and Turrialba, it stretches eastward to the Atlantic. Between Alajuela and the southern tip of Nicoya peninsula lies a territory little known archeologically, but which seems to be transitional between the Highland and Pacific areas. Northward from the Highland area, across the line of volcanoes, lie the jungle-buried plains of San Carlos and Tortuguero, which slope to Lake Nicaragua and to the Atlantic. Here also a culture of transitional type may some day be found.

The history of Costa Rica is accessible to English readers through the excellent work of Fernández Guardia, which has been translated (1913).<sup>1</sup> Nicaragua has not been so well covered by the modern

<sup>1</sup> See the Bibliography, Volume II, Appendix V.

historian; the best books are Bancroft's general treatise on the History of Central America and the works of Ayón and Gámez in Spanish. The following brief outline shows the early Spanish expeditions which produced the literary sources for study of the native tribes.

- 1502. Costa Rica and Nicaragua were discovered by Columbus, who, on his fourth voyage, traversed the entire Atlantic coast of both countries.
- 1519. Hernán Ponce de León and Juan de Castañeda discovered the Pacific coast of Costa Rica.
- 1522. Gil González Dávila and Andrés de Cereceda traversed the Pacific coast of Costa Rica and Nicaragua by sea and land.
- 1524. Francisco Fernández de Córdoba founded Bruselas in Costa Rica, and León and Granada in Nicaragua. The settlement in Costa Rica proved abortive, but Nicaragua remained in Spanish possession from this time forward.
- 1528. The historian Gonzálo Fernández de Oviedo visited Nicoya and Nicaragua.
- 1540. Hernán Sánchez de Badajoz attempted a settlement at the mouth of Sixaola river.
- 1544. Diego de Gutiérrez, among whose followers was the historian Benzoni, attempted a settlement on the Suerre or Reventazón river.
- 1561. Juan de Cavallón marched overland from Nicaragua to Nicoya, thence to the central plateau where he founded the town of Garcimuñoz. This was the first successful settlement in Costa Rica.
- 1562. Juan Vásquez de Coronado succeeded Cavallón. In the following years his expeditions from Garcimuñoz penetrated to the southern portion of Costa Rica along both coasts and also northward to San Juan river.
- 1568. Perafán de Ribera explored the southern half of Costa Rica along both coasts.

In reducing Maya dates to Christian we have followed the system of Morley and Spinden which places the beginning of the ninth *baktun* in the year 176 A. D.



PART I  
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



## CHAPTER I

### TRIBES AND LANGUAGES

#### CLASSIFICATION AND GENERAL DISCUSSION

FOR the purpose of classification, the Indian tribes of Costa Rica and Nicaragua may be divided into three linguistic categories: (1) tribes of northern affinity, (2) tribes of southern affinity, and (3) tribes of uncertain affiliation.

The principal tongue from the north was Nahuatl, a language of many dialects, once spoken from the United States to Panama, of which the best known idiom is Aztec. Historical records show that Nahuatl-speaking peoples passed southward from Mexico along the coast of the Pacific and reached Nicaragua shortly before the conquest; indeed, Motolinia (1914, p. 9) expressly states that they reached Nicaragua only a century before the Spaniards, or about the year 1420 A. D. These settlers all appear to have been Toltec, with the exception of one small Aztec band in southern Costa Rica.

In western Nicaragua the Maribio tongue was spoken in two small districts. This language has proved to be related to Tlapanec, spoken in the State of Guerrero in southern Mexico, to the Hokan linguistic group in California, and to the Coahuilteco group of Texas and northeastern Mexico.

The tribes of definite southern affinity all spoke dialects of Chibchan, a tongue which once extended from Ecuador to Nicaragua. Archeological evidence indicates that the Chibcha had been settled for a longer time in the southern part of their area than in the northern. We judge therefore that they were immigrants from South America, forced northward perhaps by the expansion of the Carib in Venezuela.

The linguistic connections of the tribes of central and eastern Nicaragua are still uncertain, although there is a growing tendency to class them as Chibchan. While vocabularies have been collected in this area, philologists are far from agreeing as to their relationships. It has therefore seemed best to consider separately the peoples hereinafter referred to as Ulva and Matagalpa, until such time as

their linguistic status can be determined. Owing to this uncertainty the northern border of Chibchan cannot be definitely demarcated.

The Chorotegan tongue was spoken by tribes in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and southern Mexico. These Indians appear once to have lived farther north and to have moved to Nicaragua and Costa Rica a very long time ago. The enclaves in Mexico probably were the result of subsequent migrations from the south. It has been suggested that Chorotega is related to Otomi, Mazahua, Pirinda, and Trique in central and southern Mexico.

Of Tacacho nothing is known except that it was related to none of the other tongues of Nicaragua.

We shall examine in detail the various units of population. The order of presentation and the scheme of grouping are shown in the accompanying table. Geographical distribution is indicated in pl. I.

#### TRIBES OF NORTHERN COSTA RICA AND WESTERN NICARAGUA AND THEIR RELATIONS

##### TRIBES OF NORTHERN ORIGIN:

###### *Nahua*

Nicarao  
Nahuatlato  
Desaguadero  
Bagaces  
Sigua  
Chuchures (?)

###### *Maribio*

Subtiaba  
Maribichicoa  
Tlapanec  
Coahuilteco  
Hokan

##### TRIBES OF SOUTHERN ORIGIN:

###### *Chibcha*

Talamanca  
Guetar  
Voto  
Suerre  
Corobici  
Rama

## TRIBES OF UNCERTAIN ORIGIN:

*Possibly Chibcha*

Ulva  
Matagalpa  
Mosquito

*Chorotega*

Choluteca  
Mangue  
Orotiña  
Chiapanec  
Mazatec

*Tacacho*

## I. NAHUA

Anahuac, the great plateau of central Mexico, according to aboriginal traditions had twice been the center of ethnic and cultural dispersions in the centuries preceding the Spanish conquest. The first occasion of this kind followed the overthrow of the Toltec régime in the twelfth century A. D., when a great outpouring of tribes to the south and east took place. To this migration may be traced most of the Nahua settlements in Central America. The second movement was caused by the Aztec ascendancy, for under their powerful chieftains raiding and trading expeditions pressed southward as far as the Republic of Panama, carrying with them Aztec arts and customs, but rarely leaving permanent settlements. Both of these dispersions left their impress on the region under discussion.

The groups speaking Nahuatl in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama at the time of the Spanish conquest were as follows:

A—NICARAO or NICARAGUA. This, the principal Nahuatl tribe in Nicaragua, occupied the Isthmus of Rivas, the narrow strip of land between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific. Their western boundary was the Ochomogo river. On the southeast they probably extended a short distance into Costa Rica. Possibly one or more small groups were to be found in northern Guanacaste (Costa Rica). They also are said to have occupied the islands of Lake Nicaragua, including the island of Ometepe, where Squier recorded a Nahua vocabulary. The chronicler of Alonso Ponce (I, p. 369), however, states that a tongue related neither to Nahuatl nor to Mangue was

spoken on the Lake Nicaragua islands; but Berendt (MS.), on the evidence of place-names, states that the Nicarao lived on the islands and also on the north shore of the lake. We must regard this hypothesis, however, as questionable until it is confirmed by archeological evidence.

The "capital" of the Nicarao was Quauhcapolca, near the modern town of Rivas. Other important centers were Tecoatega, Totoaca, Teoca, Mistega, Xoxoyta, Papagayo, Ochomogo, and Oxmorio. The name of the cacique Niqueragua has been perpetuated in that of the Republic of Nicaragua (see pages 20-21).

The migration legends of the Nicarao are exceedingly confused, yet they afford some information of interest. We may commence by examining the narrative of Torquemada, who gives the fullest account and who gathered his knowledge at first hand. This writer (lib. III, cap. XL) tells us that—

a. The old men of Nicaragua used to say that their ancestors and those of the Nicoyans ("*que por otro Nombre, se dicen Mangnes*," i. e., Mangues) once lived in the desert of "Xoconochco" (Soconusco), which lay between Soconusco and Tehuantepec.

b. The Nicoyans were descendants of the Chololteca (see page 8) and dwelt in the mountains. The Nicaragua were "Mexicans, from Anahuac," i. e., the Valley of Mexico.

c. Thus they lived for a period of time equal to the sum of the lives of seven or eight very old men, when the Olmeca, who long before had been their enemies, suddenly appeared from Mexico, and conquered them.

d. Unable to bear the harsh servitude imposed on them by the Olmeca, they consulted their leaders, who took counsel with their gods for eight days, and then advised them to migrate in a body, which they did forthwith.

e. After they had traveled twenty days, one of their leaders died.

f. They passed through Guatemala and left a colony at "Eçalcos," i. e., Izalco (Salvador), of which the inhabitants were called "Pepil." Other settlements were established at "Mictlan," i. e. Mitlan (Salvador) or Asunción Mita (Guatemala), and at "Yzcuintlan," i. e. Escuintla (Guatemala).

g. The others pressed on to the province of Choluteca in Honduras, where their second leader died, having made the following prophecies:

That the Nicoyans should go ahead of the others and that some day they would be subject to bearded white men worse than the Olmeca;

That the Olmeca (from whom they were supposedly fleeing) should settle near the South sea toward the east near the Gulf of San Lucar (Gulf of Nicoya);

That the tribes of Nicaragua should settle on a fresh-water sea within sight of an island with two peaks, which obviously refers to the island of Ometepe, the very name of which means "two mountains" in Nahuatl.

h. The Nahuia band then passed across to the North sea, "and near the Desaguadero [i. e., San Juan river] there is a town inhabited by them, and they speak a Mexican tongue not so corrupt as that of the Pipiles."

i. The main body pushed on to Nombre de Dios (Republic of Panama). Thence they recrossed the land, in search of the fresh-water sea, and came to Nicoya, where they found their former traveling companions, who told them of the Nicaraguan lakes.

j. From Nicoya they went to Xolotlan, or Nagarando, i. e., the plains of León (Nicaragua); but they were not content there, because they could not see the twin peaks of Ometepe.

k. Finally they moved to "Nicaragua," where the inhabitants received them as guests. After some time they asked for many porters to help move their goods. Their hosts gladly accommodated them, because they were tired of supporting so many strangers. However, the Nahuia killed the unfortunate porters in their sleep and defeated in battle their former hosts.

l. The Nahuia then settled down and the former inhabitants fled to Nicoya.

This very confused account evidently covers the migrations of several tribes, and all the Nahuia groups south of Salvador, except

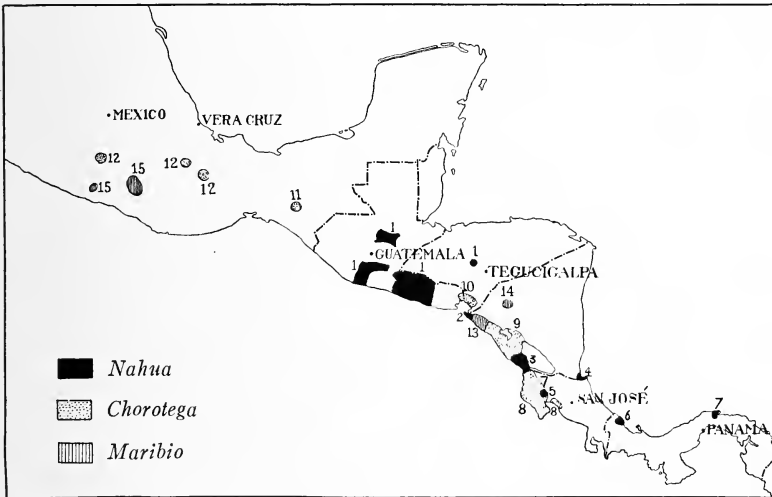


FIG. 2. — Linguistic stocks found in Mexico and Central America. (*Nahua*: 1, Pipil; 2, Nahuatlato; 3, Nicarao; 4, Desaguadero; 5, Bagaces; 6, Sigua; 7, Chuchures (?). *Chorotega*: 8, Orotina; 9, Mangue; 10, Choluteca; 11, Chiapanec; 12, Mazatec. *Maribio*: 13, Subtiaba; 14, Maribichicoa; 15, Tlapaneec.)

the Sigua, whose presence is otherwise explained, seem to be included. It is noteworthy that at the stopping places mentioned Nahuia colonies are known to have existed, e.g., the Nahuatlato near Choluteca, the Nicarao near Ometepe, the Desaguadero on the Rio

San Juan, the Bagaces near Nicoya, and possibly the Chuchures at Nombre de Dios (fig. 2).

The Nicoyans, as we shall presently see, were members of the Chorotegan stock. While Torquemada is apparently the first to confuse *Chorotega* (which the Spaniards corrupted to *Choluteca*) with *Chololteca*, a Nahuatl word signifying an inhabitant of Cholula, this error has been perpetuated in the works of many writers. A discussion of the origin of the word *Chorotega* is presented on page 20. From other sources we learn that the Chorotega were the original settlers in western Nicaragua,<sup>1</sup> and that the Nicarao and Chorotega differed in speech, manners, customs, and ceremonies.<sup>2</sup> We therefore find no ground for confusing the two peoples.

To return to the story of the Nicarao, I believe we can accept as true that they came originally from the Mexican plateau, probably at the time of the traditional breaking-up of the Toltec empire which seems to have been attended by great ethnic disorders. From Soconusco they moved to Nicaragua about a century before the Spaniards came. Calculating the "life of a very old man" at between 50 and 70 years, it follows that they probably left Anahuac between the end of the ninth and the end of the eleventh century, and arrived at Nicaragua in the early part of the fifteenth century.

While Motolinía and Gomara<sup>3</sup> state that the cause of the migration to Nicaragua was a great drought, they both support in a general way the narrative of Torquemada, which also receives confirmation from the story told by the Nicarao to Fray Francisco de Bobadilla and quoted by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. II):

We are not natives of this country, and it is long since our ancestors came to it; we do not remember how long, for it was not in our time. . . . The land from which our progenitors came is called Ticomega and Maguatega, and it lies toward the setting sun; and they came away because they had masters there whom they served, and who ill-treated them.

In that land the ancestors of the Nicarao said they had served their masters—

as we now serve the Christians—in plowing and sowing, and personal service; and their masters kept them for these purposes; and also ate them; and thus fear caused them to leave their homes, and come to this land of Nicaragua; and their masters had also come from other regions, and subjugated them, because they were very numerous; and for this reason, they left their country and came to that one where they were.

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<sup>1</sup> See notes, page 25.

Brinton (1883, p. vii) derives the word *Ticomenga* from the Aztec *tiachcauhmecatl*, our elder brothers, i.e., the ranking or senior clans of the tribe, and *Maguatega* from *maque tecatl*, the upper people, i.e., the dwellers in the interior plateau. Lehmann (1915) connects these names with Ticoman (Ticomantlan) and Miahuatlan, two towns near Cholula, Mexico.

Torquemada (lib. II, cap. LXXXI) also records an invasion of Nicaragua by Aztec forces, who, defeated in battle, gained possession of the province by the same trick the Nicarao had employed against the former inhabitants. Gold, green feathers, and jade were thereafter paid in tribute to Montezuma. We should regard this tale as rather doubtful were it not that similar Aztec incursions are known to have penetrated much farther south.

B—NAHUATLATO. This group occupied Point Coseguina on Fonseca bay, the extreme western tip of Nicaragua. Alonso Ponce's *Relación* (I, pp. 352, 379) informs us that their principal towns, Cualtepetl and Olomega, were abandoned in 1586 by order of the Spanish clergy, who caused the natives to settle in El Viejo and Chinandega. Cualtepetl, on the ruins of which Alonso Ponce passed the night, lay on the coast near Point Coseguina, and Olomega was six leagues north of El Viejo.

The word *Nahuatlato* means interpreter. It is easy to comprehend how such a name arose, for the usual route from Salvador to Nicaragua was across rather than around Fonseca bay, and these Indians were doubtless employed as interpreters by many travelers.

Alonso Ponce's *Relación* (I, p. 359) tells us that Managua was inhabited by "*indios navales que hablan la lengua mexicana corrupta*." As we have positive information that Managua was built in Chorotegan territory (Oviedo, lib. XLII, cap v), we must accept this statement as an example of the rapid spread of Nahuatl after the conquest to the exclusion of other native languages, a phenomenon which has been fully treated by Brinton (1883, p. xvi, et seq.).

C—DESAGUADERO. According to Torquemada (lib. III, cap. XL), who, in contradistinction to most Spanish historians, visited Nicaragua in person, there was a small Nahua colony at the mouth of San Juan river. "On the North sea and near the Desaguadero," he writes, "there is a town of these Indians, and they speak a Mexican dialect not so corrupt as that of the Pipiles."

While no direct confirmation of Torquemada's statement exists, yet it is given weight by a royal cedula (Peralta, 1883, p. 117) dated 1535 in which the Queen of Spain ordered the outlet of the San Juan river explored because gold was carried thence to Montezuma by way of Yucatan. We seem to be dealing then with an Aztec trading post. As no name is given to this group, I propose *Desaguadero*, which is the old name of the San Juan river, at the mouth of which they lived.

D—BAGACES. A document dated 1573<sup>4</sup> states that the inhabitants of the town of Bagaces, in northwestern Costa Rica, spoke the tongue of Nicaragua, i.e., Nahuatl. Of course there is the possibility that this tongue may have been acquired after the conquest, and the same source informs us that this people also spoke Spanish. If one language could be learned, why not another?

In this instance, however, it is possible that Nahuatl was the original tongue, for it seems fairly certain that one or more small groups had split off from the Nicaraos to settle in northern Guanaacaste.<sup>5</sup> The writer visited Bagaces and found a widespread belief among the present inhabitants that they are descended in part from Mexican stock, a belief in which they exhibit considerable pride.

E—SIGUA. The Nahuatl group most distant from Mexico occupied the Island of Tojar, or Zorobaro, in Almirante bay (Republic of Panama), and the neighboring valley of Telorio, or Duy. Their towns were Chiacua, Moyaua, Quequexque, and Corotapa.

The Sigua told the Spaniards<sup>6</sup> that they had been sent to Talamanca to collect the gold which the "Caribs"<sup>7</sup> were accustomed to pay to Montezuma, and that they had settled there when they heard of the conquest of Mexico by Cortés. Their cacique Iztolin conversed in Nahuatl with Juan Vásquez de Coronado in 1564 (Fernández, Documentos, iv, p. 297).

The word *Sigua* is said to signify "foreigner" in the Talamancan dialects, and is comparable with the Nahuatl *Chontal*. Synonyms are Cigua, Segua, Xicagua, Chichagua, Chicagua, and Shelaba.

F—CHUCHURES. Andagoya (p. 23) states:

In Nombre de Dios there was a certain race of people called Chuchures, with a language different from that of the other Indians. They came to settle in this place in canoes from Honduras, and as the country was unhealth-

ful, their numbers decreased, and there were but few of them. Of these none survived the treatment they received after Nombre de Dios was founded.

This small tribe may perhaps have been of Nahuatl extraction, as the name suggests, for reduplicated forms, such as Pipil, Chichimec, Popoloca, etc., are characteristic of the Nahuatl tongue. Such reasoning, however, may be unsound. Slight confirmation may be gained from the legend preserved by Torquemada (see page 7) that Nahua peoples pushed down the San Juan river and went to Nombre de Dios.

G—Finally, mention must be made of the invasion of Panama by an unnamed tribe (described by Andagoya and Herrera) which, by their anthropophagous tendencies and their warlike attitude, may be provisionally classed as a band of the Aztec *Pochteca*, or merchants' guild. This Hun-like incursion is described by Herrera (dec. II, lib. III, cap. VI) in the following words:

Two years before the Spaniards entered the Province of París, there arrived a vast army of men who came on an excursion from Nicaragua, ferocious and warlike, wherefore all the provinces went out to receive them in peace and gave them what they asked. They ate human flesh, wherefore they caused great fear in the lands to which they came. They pitched their camp in a province which bordered on that of París, called Tubrabá, in a plain, where the towns took them boys, whom they ate, and other sustenance which they asked. A grievous sickness overtook them and forced them to move their army and return to the coast of the sea, whence they had come. And as the lord Cutatura of the said París perceived that they were sick and negligent, he gave them a "*Dia al Alva*" and killed them all, so that not one survived, and he took the spoil, among which was a quantity of gold.

## II. MARIBIO

Spanish writers of the sixteenth century applied the term Maribio, or Marivio, to the natives dwelling in the province of that name (also known as Los Desollados) in northwestern Nicaragua. Modern linguistic investigators have adopted the term Subtiaban to designate the language, because the first vocabularies were collected by Squier in the town of Subtiaba. As the town of Subtiaba was originally occupied by the Mangue (Alonso Ponce, I, p. 356) and was not associated with the Maribio until the time of Squier, it has seemed best to adhere to the ancient terminology, reserving the word Subtiaban for one of the two political divisions to be described.

The language was long thought to be unrelated to any other,

although words borrowed from Chibchan, Matagalpan, Xicaque, and Payan had been detected. Lehmann (1915) has established the fact that Maribio is closely related to Tlapanec of Oaxaca. Sapir (1925) has detected affinity with the Hokan linguistic family of California (Karak, Chimariko, Shasta-Achomawi, Yana, Pomo, Washo, Esselen, Yuman, Chumash, Salinan, Seri, and Tequislateco) and with the Coahuiltecan (Pakawan) of Texas and northeastern Mexico (Comecrudo, Cotoname, Tonkawa, Karankawa, and Atakapa). He believes that Maribio and Tlapanec "are to be regarded as a southern outlier of the Hokan-Coahuiltecan stock as a whole," rather than related to any single dialect in the north.

A—SUBTIABA. Alonso Ponce, traveling from Salvador to Managua noted the presence of Maribio Indians in the towns of Chinandega, Miauagalpa, Pozolteca, Chichigalpa, and Mazatega, which names, it will be noted, are all of the Nahuatl origin. They serve, however, to limit the territory of the Subtiaba, except in the direction of the interior, where the boundary with the Ulva cannot be determined with exactness. The region seen on the map (pl. 1) includes the range of mountains known as Los Maribios, which preserve the ancient name of this group. It is a point of interest rather than of importance, perhaps, that the town of Subtiaba was originally occupied by the Mangue (Alonso Ponce, I, p. 356), and the name Subtiaba applied to these people is therefore a misnomer.

In regard to the name Subtiaba, Berendt (MS.) writes:

In vain I have searched the words of the Subtiaban language to find some corresponding with one or the other syllables of that name. It may be a corruption of a Nahuatl name, perhaps of Xochia—or Suchiapan (river of Flowers). This will appear less improbable when we consider what strange changes some Indian names have undergone in the Conquerors' mouths, for instance, the transformation of Ahuilitzapan to Orizaba.

B—MARIBICHICOA. Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII) tells us that a second group of the Maribio lived thirty leagues from León, on the banks of the Maribichicoa or Guatahiguala river. The population of this group was composed of Subtiaba who had migrated during a period of famine shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards. Lehmann (1915) has sought to show that *Guatahiguala* is a Lenca word and that this tribe must therefore have lived with the Lenca of Salvador. This reasoning, however, is faulty, for several sixteenth-

century documents locate this river in the Department of Nueva Segovia in Nicaragua, presumably near the town of that name.

C—TLAPANEC. The extensive comparative vocabularies published by Lehmann (1915) have shown that Tlapanec is closely related to the Subtiaban dialect of Nicaragua. The problems raised by the many small linguistic groups of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec do not directly concern us. It is enough here to state that at least two Nicaraguan languages—Maribio and Chorotegan—are represented, and that promiscuous borrowing has added greatly to the complexities of the situation. The Tlapanec have been encountered in recent years in the towns of Potinchan, Tolomixtlahuacan, Pascala, Atlauiajalcinco, and Mixtecapan.

### III. CHIBCHA

The Chibchan tribe, from which a great linguistic family has been named, lived in the region of Bogotá in Colombia. The Chibchan language, however, extended from Ecuador to Nicaragua, and possibly into Honduras. The chief dialectic groups of the Isthmian region belonging to this stock were the Dorasque, Guaymi, and Talamanca, extending roughly from the Panama canal up to a line running eastward from the Volcano of Herradura. Between these tribes and South America were the Cuña, who spoke a language as yet unclassified, which may have been a Chibchan dialect. In northern Costa Rica the Guetar, Voto, Suerre, and Corobici spoke Chibchan. In Nicaragua the Rama were certainly of Chibchan speech, as possibly also were the Ulva and other tribes of the area of the Cordilleras. The Matagalpa and Mosquito of Nicaragua, and the Paya, Lenca, and Xicaque of Honduras, must still be regarded as unaffiliated, yet there is a tendency to place them also in the Chibchan family.

Consideration of the peoples of Honduras, Panama, Colombia, and Ecuador is beyond the scope of this work; but we must examine in some detail the members of this great linguistic family who formerly dwelt in Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

A—TALAMANCAN. The tribes speaking closely allied dialects, which lived on both sides of the Cordilleras in the southern half of Costa Rica, have been grouped under the name Talamancan. The

southern boundary is roughly marked by a line drawn from Almirante bay to the Rio Coto. To the north they extend as far as the territory of the Guetar. The complex tribal groupings of this region have been studied by Gabb, Pittier, Thiel, Pinart, Fernández, Peralta, and others. As this problem does not directly concern us, the reader is referred to their works for further information, a convenient summary of which will be found in Swanton and Thomas (1911).

B—GUETAR. Although the tribes grouped under this name occupied a large area and came in contact with the Spaniards at an early date, there is little information concerning them. The name is taken from that of the chief *Huetare* (see fig. 3, page 21). Oviedo (lib. XXIX, cap. XXI) states that they lived on the hills behind the Point of Herradura and extended to the confines of Chorotega. The term today, however, is applied to tribes of the interior and the Atlantic slopes as well.

The language has been studied principally by Uhle, Herzog, Thiel (1882), and Brinton (1897, 1898). From the labors of these investigators it has been established that Guetar is a Chibchan dialect very closely related to, if not identical with, that spoken in Talamanca. It should be pointed out that, in determining the nature of the language, documentary evidence of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is more trustworthy than actual vocabularies collected in the nineteenth century, because Indians were imported from Talamanca to replace the Guetar who had died under the harsh conditions imposed on them or had escaped to the territory of the Voto and Corobici. Gagini (1917, pp. 56-57) cites six documents showing that Talamanca were settled by the Spaniards in the Guetar villages. From these sources it appears that Talamanca Indians went to Tres Rios, Garabito, Atirro, Tucurrique, Orosi, Ujarraz, etc., and that in 1666 the Voto were moved bodily to Atirro. The vocabulary quoted by Brinton was obtained in Orosi and Tucurrique by Señor Riotte; but its value may be questioned, since Gabb, writing in 1875, stated that the inhabitants of these two towns spoke Talamancan.

A document published by Fernández (Documentos, v, p. 218) is of great importance, for it not only shows that Guetar and Talamancan were similar, but states that Guetar was "the material and general tongue" of all Costa Rica.

A further point has been brought out by Zeledón (1918). Fray

Agustín de Zevallos, the Provincial of the Franciscans in the Province of San Jorge de Nicaragua y Costa Rica, in a letter to the King, dated 1610 (see Appendix II), states that three tongues were spoken in his district. Fray Martín del Castillo, of the Franciscan monastery in Cartago, writes that there are three tongues: *lengua Guetar*, *lengua de Nicoya* (Orotiñan), *lengua de Nicaragua* (Nahuatl). These three presumably are the ones to which Agustín de Zevallos refers. Now, as Zevallos worked many years to christianize the Indians of Talamanca, he would have said there were four tongues in his district if Talamancan and Guetar were not so essentially similar as to be included under the term Guetar. That this priest was thoroughly acquainted with both Guetar and Talamancan is established by the fact that he wrote a catechism in the Guetar tongue, which unfortunately is lost.

Finally, we can point to a document (Costa Rica-Panama Arbitration, I, p. 233), written in 1617, in which Diego de Cubillo undertook to reconquer Talamanca and to "translate the Catechism and rules of Christian Doctrine into the general and vernacular language of that province, which language they call 'Güetar'."

The political divisions of the Guetar are obscure and puzzling. It is doubtful if much central authority was exercised by any chiefs until the natives organized to resist the Spaniards. Costa Rican scholars of recent years, however, believe that the Guetar were ruled by two great chieftains, Garabito and Guarco, and by two lesser but independent chiefs, Pacaca and Asseri (see page 16).

*a*—GARABITO. A cacique of this name, who led the main opposition to the Spaniards, controlled the region between the Cordillera Central, the Cordillera de la Candelaria, the headwaters of the Rio Virilla, and the Pacific ocean. Gagini (1917, p. 54) states that this chief was the overlord of the Tices, the Catapas, the Valley of Coyoche (Esparta), and the towns of Turrubara, Abaçara, Chucasque, Cobobici, Barva, Cobux, Xoquia, Yurusti, and Toyopan. It is also said that Garabito held tributary the large territory ascribed to the Voto, into which he fled when defeated by the Spaniards. At least one of this chief's successors bore the same name, a fact which has caused some confusion.

*b*—GUARCO. This chief apparently did not hold such absolute sway as Garabito, yet his name is applied to the area covering the

region of Cartago and the valleys of the Reventazón, Pacuare, and Matina rivers. Gagini (loc. cit.) lists the towns subject to Guarco as Coó, Querco, Istaro, Uxarraci, Abituri, Turichiquí, Turrialva la Grande, Turrialva la Chica, Toboci, Oroci, Ebuxebux, Pura-pura (of which Guarco was the cacique), Corroci, Atirro, Teotique, Parragua, and Xufragua.

c—PACACA. This town is situated to the west of San José. Some doubt exists as to its status, and there is reason to believe that it may have been independent. Juan Vásquez de Coronado asserts that the cacique of Pacaca had practically exterminated the Orotiña on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Nicoya.<sup>8</sup>

d—ASSERI. The cacique of Asseri may also have been independent. Gagini (1917, p. 5) says that the chiefs Tiribi, Churraca, Caricabi, Cutiuba, Tiribari, Toboda, and Tuarco, were subject to him.

C—VORO. These Indians occupied the valleys of the San Carlos, Pocosol, and Sarapiquí rivers. To the south they extended to the Cordillera Central, and probably across these mountains into the Province of Alajuela. Their name is preserved today in Volcán de los Votos, or Poás. As stated above, they were tributary to Garabito.

In 1639 the Voto were visited by Hernándo de Sibaja, who talked with the natives by means of a Guetar interpreter (Fernández, Documentos, II, p. 244). The expedition of Jerónimo de Retes in 1640 encountered two Voto chiefs named Pisisara and Pocica.

The linguistic affinities of the Voto have long been obscure, but the document last referred to proves conclusively that their tongue was similar to, if not actually the same as Guetar. Another document (op. cit., VI, p. 387) speaks of "a province called *Suerre*, which is the land of the Boto." As we shall see presently, the *Suerre* spoke a dialect of Talamancan, and we thus have the Voto and *Suerre* linguistically grouped with Guetar and Talamancan.

D—SUERRE. This name was applied to the people inhabiting the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica behind the Tortuguero lagoon and around the mouths of the Reventazón and Pacuare rivers. Benzoni (1857, p. 141) has preserved five words of their language, on which basis Brinton (1897) and later Lehmann (1910) have identified it as a

Talamancan dialect. Benzoni has also preserved the names of four chiefs: Suerre, Chiuppa, Camachire, and Cocori.

E—COROBICI. This tribe, speaking another Chibchan dialect, takes its name from the chieftain *Corevisi* (fig. 3), encountered by the expedition of Gil González Dávila. They lived on the southeastern shores of Lake Nicaragua and extended across the Cordillera de Tilaran as far as the Gulf of Nicoya. Their eastern and western frontiers cannot be definitely fixed.

After the arrival of the Spaniards, the Corobici gradually withdrew to the impenetrable forests of the plain of San Carlos, where their descendants are now known as the Guatuso Indians. As late as 1834, however, Galindo (1836, p. 134) said that a few of them still lived between Bagaces and Esparta.

An aura of mystery has surrounded the Guatuso owing to their inaccessibility and wildness. For many years it was commonly believed that they were a white race with red hair, and that their name was derived from a small animal with red fur called *guatuzá*. Gagini (1917, p. 80) states that the name arose because, in the middle of the eighteenth century, strange Indians appeared near Esparta and robbed the countryside, especially in the *Potrero de la Guatusa* and on the *Cerro Guatuso*. An expedition was organized which drove the raiders back toward Lake Nicaragua, whence they had come, and the name Guatuso has since been applied to them. An interesting summary of the eighteenth-century attempts to penetrate their territory is given by Fernández (1889, pp. 622-640).

Today, however, we are in possession of Guatuso vocabularies, thanks to the labors of Thiel, Sapper, Fernández, and others. The mystery has been dispelled, and the linguistic relationship of the Guatuso and their ancestors, the Corobici, with the Talamancan branch of Chibchan has been established.

F—RAMA. The Rama Indians, who now live on an island in the Bluefields lagoon, formerly occupied the northern bank of the San Juan river. Bell and Squier both associate their speech with Guatuso. Lehmann (1910), working apparently in ignorance of earlier investigations, has confirmed the conclusions of these two pioneers. It is generally assumed that the Rama were once a tribe identical in language and speech with the Corobici.

## IV. ULVA

To the people living north and east of the lakes of Nicaragua, the early Spanish authors applied the name *Chondal*, *Chontal*, or *Ulva*. *Chontal* is a Nahuatl term signifying "stranger," and is comparable with the Nahuatl *Popoloca*, the Talamancan *Sigua*, or the Greek  $\beta\acute{\alpha}\rho\beta\alpha\rho\varsigma$ . It was never applied to any specific tongue or dialect, but has been attached to several distinct languages by Nahuatl neighbors. In this instance the term probably covers the Lenca in eastern Honduras, and the Matagalpa, Ulva, Taoca, etc., in Nicaragua.

In regard to the use of the term *Ulva* to cover a linguistic group, it should be stated that it has been used in this sense since the sixteenth century. The word *Chontal* is too indefinite and confusing, owing to its appearance in other areas. The term *Sumo-Misquito* is not only clumsy, but also links two names which most philologists have not yet agreed to place in the same linguistic group.

Lehmann (1910), the most recent investigator of this group, claims that all the tribes of northern and eastern Nicaragua speak dialects related to one another. This linguistic unit, which he calls the "Sumo-Misquito," he says is a part of the Chibchan linguistic family, to which he joins also the Lenca, Xicaque, and Paya, of Honduras. This arrangement brings the greater part of southern Central America into linguistic unity; but it must be admitted that most philologists fail to confirm this hypothesis on the evidence now available.

The Ulva occupied the eastern shores of Lake Nicaragua and Lake Managua and extended to Fonseca bay and even across it into the Province of San Miguel (Salvador). Both Alonso Ponce (I, p. 388) and Palacio (1881, p. 6) speak of Ulva in San Miguel.<sup>9</sup> Alonso Ponce (I, pp. 339-342) states that the Ulva occupied the towns of Ola, Colama, Santiago Lamaciuy, Zomoto, Zazacali, and Condega, on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Fonseca. Squier, in a note to his translation of Palacio (p. 102), says that "Chontal" was spoken in Totogalpa, Telpaneca, Mosonte, and Somoto Grande, but this is probably Lenca rather than Ulva.

Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII) mentions a tribe called Guaxenico, which was probably one of Ulvan tribes. Oviedo's statement is as follows:

From the city of *León* there are nine leagues to *Olocotón*, and six leagues

farther are the first *guaxenicos*, which is a certain race so called; and another three leagues beyond are other *guanexicos*, from whom there are three leagues to *Palangagalpa*; . . . .

## V. MATAGALPA

Brinton (1895a), on the basis of a vocabulary collected by Victor Noguera in Matagalpa and preserved among the Berendt manuscripts, has identified a small linguistic family, which he calls Matagalpan. Sapper (1904, p. 7) found the remnant of a related dialect in the Salvadoranean villages Cacaopera and Lislique, and he agrees with Brinton that this tongue is related to no other linguistic family. Lehmann (1910) believes that the Matagalpan is related to his "Sumo-Misquito" (Ulvan) group, and states that, on the evidence of place-names, Matagalpan was once spoken in the vicinity of Matagalpa and in parts of the departments of Nueva Segovia and Chontales (Nicaragua).

## VI. MOSQUITO

The inhabitants of the Atlantic littoral of Nicaragua, today known as Mosquitos, are a mixed people of uncertain origin. Although discovered by Columbus as early as 1502, the Spanish authorities made little attempt at pacification, and the first Europeans with whom these Indians became closely associated were the freebooters of the seventeenth century. As a result of this contact there was a considerable infusion of white blood, and much negro blood is also obviously present today. The language of the Mosquito is regarded as forming an independent stock by most students, although a great amount of borrowing from other tongues is recognized. Lehmann believes the tongue is a Chibchan dialect, closely related to Sumo.

Lehmann (1910, p. 715) has recorded an interesting migration legend according to which the Mosquitos lived until the tenth century between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific on the strip of land known as the "isthmus" of Rivas. At this time they called themselves Kiribis, a name which has an alluring similarity to Corobici. They were driven from their homes after a long war by invaders from the north, and, crossing the lake, settled in the present Department of Chontales. Here they were again attacked by invaders from the north. After 50 or 100 years of war they recalled an old prophecy that they never could be driven from the Atlantic coast, so they

moved there under the leadership of Wakna. His son, Lakia tara, conquered the coast from Honduras to Costa Rica, and under him they reached the apogee of their power. Later there were civil wars. About the year 1100 certain cannibals called the Visvises settled on the coast and built towns with tumuli on their streets. Whence they came or whither they went is not known.

This legend is confirmed to some extent by archeology. Squier (1852, vol. II, p. 92) has published an illustration of a stone bowl found on the Isthmus of Rivas which suggests similar finds on the Mosquito coast, and several monolithic axes of east-coast type have appeared in the Department of Chontales. In the Visvises one is tempted to recall the tale of the Chuchures of Panama that they had originally come from Honduras in canoes.

We shall have little more to say of the Mosquito or of the scant archeological remains from the region they inhabit. The reader who desires further information should consult the bibliography published by De Kalb.

## VII. CHOROTEGA

The principal linguistic stock of western Nicaragua at the time of the Spanish conquest was the Chorotegan, or Mangue. The term Chorotegan is applied by Spanish historians to include several geographical groups speaking different dialects. In view of the fact that the Mangue dialect has alone survived until recent times, there has been a tendency to apply this name to the entire stock. It has seemed best, however, to use Chorotegan as the general term and to reserve Mangue for the subdivision noted later.

Much speculation and confusion have arisen owing to the similarity between the words *Chololteca*, i.e., an inhabitant of Cholula, and *Chorotega*. Attempts to show that the Chorotega came to Nicaragua from Mexico doubtless have their origin in this similarity.

Brinton (1883, p. viii) thought that the word *Chorotega* was a Spanish corruption of *Chololteca*, which he derived from the Aztec *chololtia*, "to cause to run away," "to drive out," the compulsive form of the verb *choloa*, "to run away," and he observes that the Mexicans doubtless applied this term to the people whose land they had occupied.

The writer wishes to call attention to the fact that the names of languages in this region have persisted since the expedition of Gil

González Dávila, and that in many instances the name given to a language was the name of the first cacique encountered who spoke the new tongue (fig. 3). Thus we have the cacique *Huetare* giving his name to the Guetar, *Corcvisi* to the Corobici, *Niqueragua* to the Nicarao, or Nicaraguans. Now, the cacique *Chorotega* was the first chief of the Chorotegan tongue to be encountered by this expedition, and it seems more reasonable to assume that his name was applied to his language by the Spaniards rather than to seek an ex-

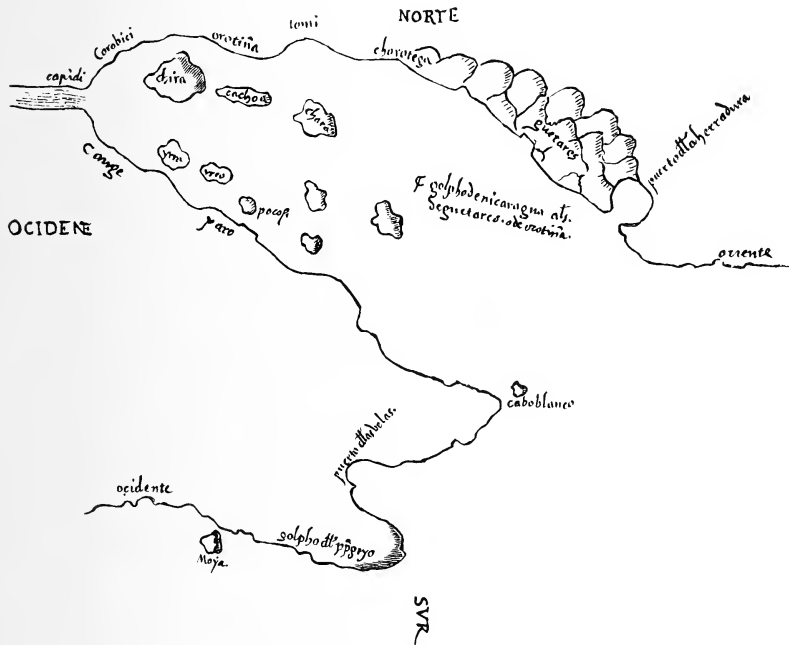


FIG. 3.—The Gulf of Nicoya, showing location of tribes. (After Oviedo.)

planation in a forced derivation from Nahuatl. A list of caciques appears in the *Relación* of Andrés de Cereceda, the treasurer of the expedition of Gil González Dávila.<sup>10</sup>

The Chorotegan linguistic family has an extremely wide distribution (fig. 2). It is found in two main groups: one in northwestern Costa Rica, western Nicaragua, and southern Honduras, and the other in southern Mexico in the states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas. The southern group has been recognized since the time

of the conquest; the northern group has been detected as the result of modern linguistic study. Archeological evidence indicates that Chorotegans once lived between these two groups in northern and western Honduras (see pages 93-94).

Lehmann (1915) has tried to join several small Mexican tongues with the Chorotega and believes that the following belong in a single group:

- a. Otomi, Mazahua, Pirinda.
- b. Trique.
- c. Popoloca of Puebla, Choco (Chuchon) of Oaxaca.
- d. Mazatec.
- e. Ixcatec (a Mazatec dialect).
- f. Chiapanec and the southern Chorotegan dialects.

Mazatec and Chiapanec have been classed as Chorotegan for more than a generation. The rest of this group has not yet been accepted generally by other students.

We now proceed to an examination of the various Chorotegan units, taking up the southern group first. Some of these groups must be regarded as geographic or political because there is not sufficient recorded linguistic material available to classify their speech.

A—CHOLUTECA. This tribe lived in what is the present Department of Choluteca (Honduras), on the shores of Fonseca bay. On the west they extended slightly over the present border into the Province of San Miguel (Salvador), and their eastern frontier was near the modern town of Choluteca. How far they extended to the north is not known.

Sixteenth-century Spanish records speak of this region as *Choluteca Malalaca*. *Choluteca* is without doubt a Spanish corruption of *Chorotega*, for early maps call the Gulf of Fonseca the *Bahia de Chorotega*. The word *Malalaca* is doubtless the native name of this area.

The principal towns of the Choluteca were Nacaome, Goascoran, Namasigue, Orocuina, Nicomongoya, and Nacarahego.

B—MANGUE. Alonso Ponce's *Relación* applies the word *Mangue* to the tongue spoken by the natives between Subtiaba and Managua, and Palacio uses the same term. Berendt (MS.) writes that the Indians of this region "call themselves to this very day by the name of Mangues; the language is called the Mangue, and the district where it is spoken, formerly the province of Masaya, *la Man-*

*quesa*." The word itself is said to come from *mankeme*, "ruler" or "master". (See Brinton, 1883, p. viii.)

Squier (1853, p. 96) has not recognized the term *Mangue*, and has divided into two groups the people here included under it. These groups he calls the Nagrandans and Dirians; the former lived on the plain of León and the latter on the plain of Masaya. Alcedo (fide Levy, 1873, p. 7) states that such a division took place shortly before the arrival of the Spaniards, owing to a civil war. However, it seems that the Mangue were a linguistic unit, even though politically divided.

The geographical limits of the Mangue were: On the southeast were the Nicaraos, whose domain traditionally extended to the Rio Ochomogo; on the northwest were the Maribios, and the boundary fell just west of Subtiaba; to the north they extended across the Tipitapa river and for six leagues along the eastern shore of Lake Managua; the southern limit was the Pacific.

The principal towns of the Mangue were Salteba,<sup>11</sup> Masaya, Mombacho, Managua, Tipitapa, Diriomo, Diriamba, Niquinomo, Masatepe, Nandaime, Subtiaba, Nagarote, Matiari, Mabiti, and Nindiri. Important "provinces" were Nagrando (or Xolotlan), Nequepio, Nequecheri, and Masaya.

C—OROTIÑA. Gil González Dávila, marching along the shores of the Gulf of Nicoya, encountered the cacique *Chorotega*, whose name, as we have seen, was applied to the linguistic family. Five leagues beyond Chorotega lived the cacique *Gurutina*, whose name, in corrupted form, has been applied to all the Chorotegans of Costa Rica (fig. 3).

Geographically the Orotiña were divided into two groups by the Corobici. One of these occupied the Peninsula of Nicoya and the territory northward nearly to the present Nicaraguan border. The second group lived on the eastern shores of the Gulf of Nicoya, between Puntarenas and Abangares, in the region known as Chorotega la Vieja, or Cholutequilla. This group was exterminated by the Guetar shortly after the arrival of the Spaniards.

Oviedo (lib. xxix, cap. xxi, sec. vi) states that Chorotegan was spoken on all the islands of the Gulf of Nicoya except the Island of Chara.

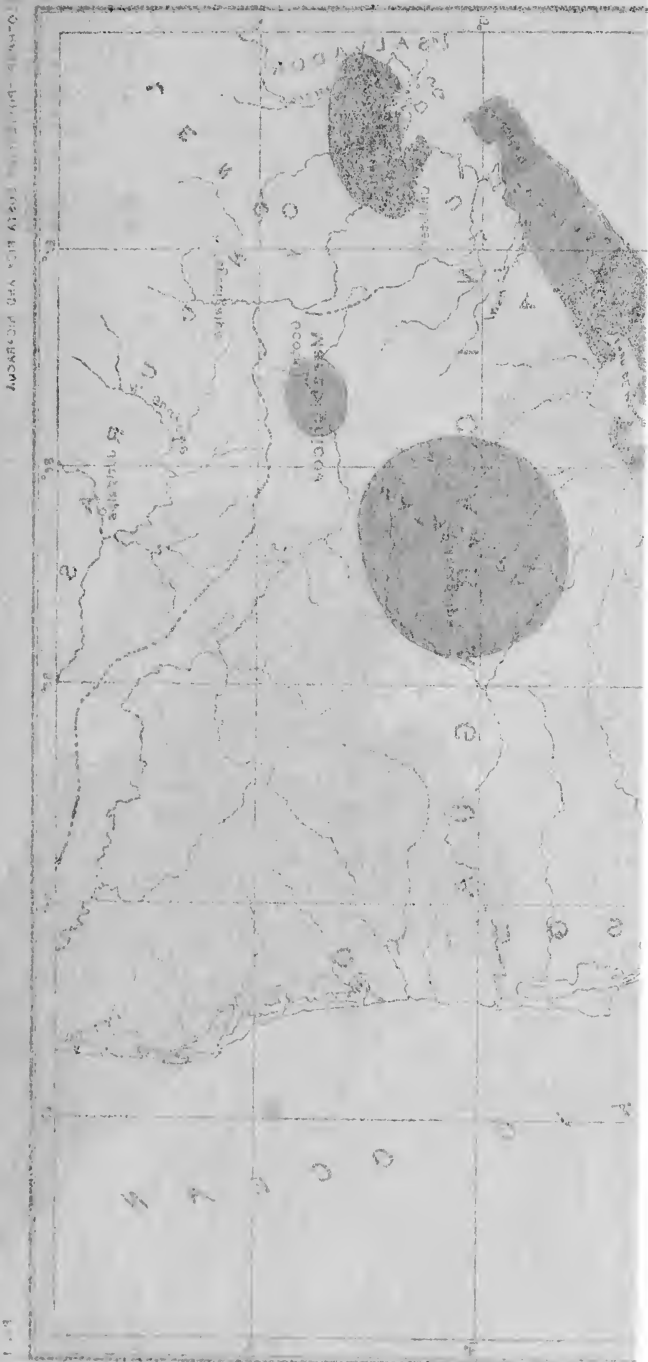
The most important Orotiña caciques were those of Nicoya and Orosi. Fernández Guardia (1913, p. 6) states that the cacique of

Nicoya exercised authority over the chiefs of Zapandí, Diríá, Mamiapí, Orosí, Papagayo, Cangén, Paro, Chomes, Orotina, and Churuteca. That such was the case, however, seems rather doubtful, for Andrés de Cereceda (from whom this list of names is taken) and other early writers make reference to no such overlordship. However, just as the Mangue can be divided into the Dirian and Nagrandan, so it seems advisable to divide the Orotiña into three groups. The first of these consists of the Orotiña proper, dwelling on the eastern margin of the Gulf of Nicoya; the second group, the Nicoya, were the inhabitants of the Peninsula of Nicoya; a third group, the Orosí, lived in the northern portion of the present Province of Guanacaste. The bases for such division are perhaps not very firm, yet such usage is found in both early and modern writings, and, as it is convenient, it has been adhered to in this work.

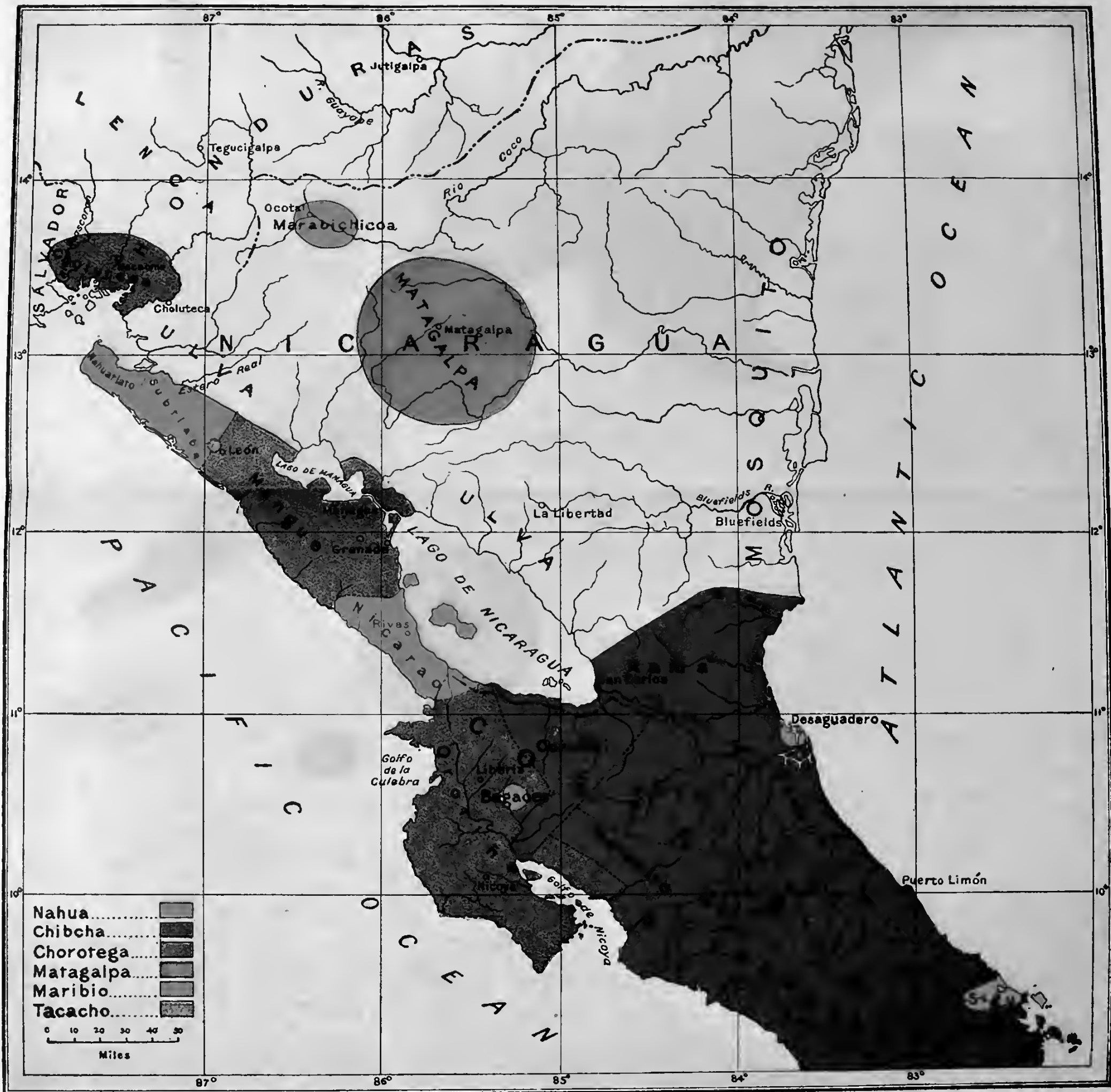
D—CHIAPANEC. We now must consider the Chorotega of Mexico, of whom the most southerly are the Chiapanec dwelling in the State of Chiapas. Remesal,<sup>12</sup> our best authority on Chiapas, states that the Chiapanec came from Nicaragua. Brasseur de Bourbourg (1871, p. 5) writes, "In a document in my possession the Chiapanecs affirm that they had colonized a part of that province [of the Dirians of Nicaragua] more than a thousand years before the conquest." García<sup>13</sup> says that all the Chorotega came from the direction of New Mexico, i.e., the north, to Soconusco, where they divided, one branch returning to Chiapas, while the other pushed on to Nicaragua. However this may be, when first encountered by the Spaniards the Chiapanec lived in the region where they are found today, and in association with the Zotzil, Zoque, and Huave had for some time successfully defended their territories from the Aztec aggression.

Brinton (1883, p. ix) writes: "The proper spelling is 'Chapanec'. It is not an Aztec word, but from the Mangue tongue, in which *Chapa* means ara, or red macaw, their sacred bird. The name was derived from that of the lofty peak on which the principal town in Chiapas was situated—*chapa niin*, the ara of fire."

E—MAZATEC. The relationship of Mazatec to Chorotegan was first established by Brinton (1892), whose work Lehmann (1915) seemingly overlooked when publishing his similar conclusion. Mazatec falls into three groups: *a*, Mazatec of Guerrero (Teloloapan); *b*, Mazatec of Oaxaca (Teotitlan del Camino); *c*, Mazatec of Tabasco.







MAP SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGES AND TRIBES IN SOUTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA  
IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

# IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY MAP SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF LANGUAGES AND TRIBES IN SOUTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA



Brinton's study of the Mazatec of Teotitlan del Camino was based on a vocabulary collected by a Danish officer in the service of Maximilian and obtained through Pinart. This study indicates that this dialect is a blend of the Chiapanec and Talamancan, and Brinton concluded that the Mazatec were of Chorotegan stock with an admixture of Chibchan blood. Such an infusion might well have occurred in Nicaragua, where the Mangue (Chorotega) and the Corobici (Chibcha) lived on opposite sides of the lake; or in Costa Rica, where Corobici, Guetar (Chibcha), and Orotiñans (Chorotegans) lived side by side.

### VIII. TACACHO

Alonso Ponce (I, p. 356) passed through Yacacoyaua, a league northwest of Subtiaba, in which the natives spoke "a tongue called tacacho, peculiar to that place." As the writer notes the presence of Nahua, Mangue, Subtiaba, and Ulva in this region, it is possible that we have here the remnant of an independent linguistic stock.

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### NOTES

1. Gomara (1852, p. 283) states that Chorotegan is the indigenous and ancient tongue of Nicaragua: "Hay en Nicaragua cinco lenguajes muy diferentes: corobici, *que loan* mucho; chorotega, que es la natural y antigua. . . ."

This passage obviously has been wrongly copied by Herrera (dec. III, lib. IV, cap. VII), who says: "Hablaban en Nicaragua cinco lenguas diferentes, Corobici *que lo hablan* mucho en Chuloteca, que es la natural, i antigua. . . ."

2. Oviedo (lib. XXXIX, cap. III), writes: ". . . porque assi como difieren en lenguas, assi en çerimonias é ritos é amistad, y en todo lo demás son diferentes."

3. Gomara (1852, p. 284) states: ". . . é dicen que habiendo grandes tiempos há una general seca en Anauac, que llaman Nueva-España, se salieron infinitos mejicanos de su tierra, y vinieron por aquella mar Austral á poblar á Nicaragua."

Motolinía (1914, p. 9) says: "En tiempo de una gran esterilidad, compellidos muchos Indios con necesidad, salieron de esta Nueva España, y sospecho que fué en aquel tiempo que hubo cuatro años que no llovió en toda la tierra; porque se sabe que en este propio tiempo por el mar del Sur fueron gran número de canoas o barcas, las cuales aportaron y desembarcaron en Nicaragua, que está de México más de trecientas y cincuenta leguas, y dieron guerra a los naturales que allí tenían poblado, y los desbarataron y echaron de su señorío, y ellos se quedaron, y poblaron allí aquellos Nahuales; y aunque no hay más que cien años, poco más o menos, cuando los Españoles descubrieron aquella tierra de Nicaragua, que fué en el año de 1523."

Toribio de Motolinía visited Nicaragua and Costa Rica in 1528-29, according to Vásquez (I, cap. IV), who states that he preached in the Aztec tongue and that he readily understood the Nicaraguan idiom. Motolinía is then an authority of the first rank, even if he has left but little information on Nicaragua. He adds to the statement quoted the remark that the population of Nicaragua was 500,000, and he further states that in New Spain it was not known how or when the Nicaraos had reached Nicaragua.

4. "Lengua Nicaragua, la cual hablaban y entienden los dichos indios muy bien."—Fernández, *Colección de Documentos*, vol. I, p. 270.

5. See Oviedo, lib. XLII, cap. I, and Fernández, *Colección de Documentos*, vol. I, p. 122. On his linguistic map Lehmann (1911) has shown a Mexican settlement in the vicinity of the town of Nicoya. There is no justification for this, as all authorities agree that Nicoya was Chorotegan; indeed, Lehmann himself elsewhere in the paper (p. 705, note 1) states that Nicoya was a center of Chorotegan population. The assertion of this writer that the presence of Mexican colonies in Central America was established by his personal researches (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, XI ed., vol. XVIII, p. 335) is rather bewildering, for these settlements are described by the Spanish historians, and their language has been studied by Berendt, Brinton, Fernández, Gabb, Squier, Sapper, Stoll, Swanton and Thomas, et al.

6. "El gran rey Montezuma, que envió sus ejércitos . . . en demanda de la dicha provincia de la cual tuvo muchas y muy especiales piezas de oro en su poder . . . y he visto reliquias de sus soldados y ejércitos, que se llaman Nauatatos."—Juan de Estrada Rávago, p. 3.

"Luego rresta poblar otro pueblo que salga á la bahia del *Almirante*, donde ay en la tierra que llaman *Duy* más de seis mill yndios de guerra, y ay noticia que tienen su trato con los de *México* que allí quedaron quando les tomó la voz de la entrada primera de los españoles, aviendo ydo ellos por el tributo de oro que aquella provincia dava á Montezuma."—Fernández, *Colección de Documentos*, vol. V, p. 100.

7. The word *Carib* was used by the Spaniards to denote a cannibal or, in a more general sense, any wild tribe. It is a corruption of the name of the Santo Domingo chieftain *Cannaboa*, "king of the mountains and the same most powerful." See the CXLVII and CLIII letters of Peter Martyr in the 1530 edition.

8. Juan Vásquez de Coronado (1908, p. 38), writes: "Halle aquí [provincia de Pacagua] un cacique con nueve yndios manges y sus mugeres y hijos, que son por todos 26, que no an quedado mas de seys o siete mill yndios que estavan poblados en la Churuteca y Orotina, que todos los an muerto y sacrificado los huetares, y estos no pasara año que no murieran todos: saquellos de allí con lagrimas de contento, poblalos cabe al puerto de Landecho, ques en la Churuteca, propia tierra suya."

9. See Squier (1860, p. 20) and Rodríguez (1912, p. 22). Squier (op. cit., p. 114) connects the name Taulepa of San Miguel with Taulebé, or Lake Yojoa in Honduras, from which he suggests that the Taulepa spoke a Lenca dialect.

Lehmann (1910) has elaborated on this idea, and has further identified the Poton as a Maya tribe by an analysis of the word itself—a method of procedure which, I need scarcely point out, is of little value unless supported by other evidence. Both Squier and Lehmann, however, have apparently erred in believing that the Taulepa and Ulva were distinct tongues, as is shown by a careful examination of the Spanish texts, for Juarros writes “Teulepa—Ulva,” while Palacio states that the tongues of San Miguel are “Poton, i Taulepa Ulva.” Squier obviously mistranslated this passage: “Poton, Taulepa, and Ulva.”

As the very complex linguistic elements of the Fonseca Bay region are treated in detail only in the *Relación* of Alonso Ponce, the following summary (I, p. 329 et seq.) may prove of interest:

#### I. *Province of San Miguel (Salvador)*

“The Indians of this town [Oxucar] and of many others in the district speak a tongue called *Potona*, different from the *Pipil*.”

“The Indians of this district are *Potones* and some *Ulvas*, but they understand the Mexican tongue and in that language they preach to and confess them.”

The following towns spoke *Poton*: Oxucar, Auacayo, Xiquilisco, Ozolutan, Santa María, Ereuaiquin, Xiriualtique, Elenuayquin, and Amapal. This tongue was also spoken on Auetzaltepétl (Meangola) and Teca (Conxagua), the only inhabited islands of the Gulf of Fonseca.

*Ulva* was spoken in Omonleo and in another town which the inhabitants abandoned and settled in Tzirama.

The town of Santa María was divided by a ravine on one side of which lived *Potones* and on the other “Indians who speak the *Mexican* tongue . . . and call themselves ‘Los Mexicanos.’”

#### II. *Department of Choluteca (Honduras)*

Of the Indians of this region “some are *Mangues*, others *Ulvas*, and others *Potones*, and all together there are few of them.”

The *Mangue* (Cholutecan) towns were: Nicomongoya, Nacarahego, and Nacaome.

The *Ulva* towns were: Ola, Colama, Santiago Lamaciuy, Zazacali, Condega, and Zomoto.

#### III. *Western Nicaragua*

“The languages of that land are the *Mangue*, *Marivio*, and corrupt *Mexican*, and some others.”

“The tongue which is spoken in those convents and their districts is the *Mangue* in the greater part of Nicaragua, although as well there are Indians (called) *Nauales*; and in the island of the Lake another tongue of its own is spoken, in Costa Rica another and others, but through all this land runs the Mexican, as has been said.”

The *Nahuatl* towns were: Ciuatlépétl and Olomega, whose inhabitants moved to El Viejo and Chinandega.

The *Maribio* towns were: Mazatega, Chichigalpa, Pozolteca, Miauagalpa (Pozoltequilla), and Cinandega.

The *Mangue* towns were: Xutiaba, Mabiti, Nagarote, Matiara, Managua, Nindiri, and Masaya.

In Yacacoyaua the Indians spoke a "tongue called *Tacacho*, peculiar to that place."

10. This account by Andrés de Cereceda (1522) is so important that it has seemed best to quote it in full. The Spanish text will be found in Documentos Inéditos, tomo xiv. After describing the route followed from Panama, Cereceda proceeds as follows:

"The cacique *Huetare* lives 20 leagues beyond (the cacique *Cob*), 12 along the coast and 8 toward the interior: 28 souls were baptized: he gave 433 pesos, 4 tomines.

The cacique *Chorotega* lives 7 leagues beyond near the shores of the sea on the Gulf of San Vicente [Nicoya], which is the farthest point reached by the ships of the *Alcalde Mayor* (Gaspár de Espinosa). *Chorotega* is a carib [i. e., a cannibal] and from here on they all are: 487 people were baptized: he gave 4,708 pesos, 4 tomines of gold. Hither Andrés Niño brought 468 pesos, 2 tomines of gold from the island of Chira.

"The cacique *Gurutina* [Orotina] is 5 leagues beyond: 713 souls were baptized: he gave 6,053 pesos, 6 tomines of gold.

"The cacique *Chomi* [Chomes], who lives 6 leagues inland, hid himself, and his subjects abandoned their houses: 683 pesos, 2 tomines of gold were secured here.

"The cacique *Pocosi* [Oviedo mentions an island of this name "near the land in the southern part of the gulf" which León Fernández believes to be the present Pan de Azúcar] lives 4 leagues by sea across the Gulf of San Lucar from Gurutina. He gave 133 pesos of gold.

"The cacique *Paro* is 2 leagues beyond: 1,016 souls were baptized: he gave 657 pesos, 4 tomines of gold.

"The cacique *Canjén* [this is south of *Paro*] is 3 leagues beyond: 1,118 souls were baptized: he gave 3,257 pesos.

"The cacique *Nicoya* is 5 leagues farther inland: 6,063 souls were baptized: he gave 13,442 pesos of gold, together with a little given by the cacique *Mateo*.

"The cacique *Sabandi* [this is the native name of the river Tempisque] is 5 leagues beyond.

"The cacique *Corevisi* [Corobici] lives 4 leagues from *Sabandi*: 210 souls were baptized: this chief, together with the caciques *Sabandi* and *Maragua* and the caciques of *Chira*, gave 840 pesos, 4 tomines of gold.

"From the dwelling of this cacique to the mines of *Chira* [not to be confused with the island of the same name] is 6 leagues; the captain went to see them; 10 pesos, 4 tomines of low-grade gold were panned out with a wooden tray in three hours; the return trip was again 6 leagues.

"The cacique of *Diriá* [who probably lived on the river of this name] is 8 leagues from *Corevisi*: the chiefs gave 133 pesos, 6 tomines of gold: 150 people turned Christians.

"The cacique *Namiapi* [who lived on the Gulf of Culebra] lives 5 leagues beyond: 6 souls were baptized: he gave 172 pesos of gold and 22 pesos of pearls.

"The cacique *Orosi* lives 5 leagues inland: 134 became Christians; he gave 198 pesos, 4 tomines of gold.

"The cacique *Papagayo* [between Salinas bay and San Juan del Sur; this chief was probably Nahuatl] is 10 leagues beyond: 137 souls were baptized: he gave 259 pesos, mostly of low-grade gold.

"The cacique *Niqueragua* is 6 leagues distant, 3 of them inland next the fresh-water sea: 917 souls were baptized: he gave 18,506 pesos of gold, mostly of very low grade.

"The caciques of *Nochari* are 6 leagues beyond between the South sea and the fresh-water sea; these caciques are *Ochomogo*, *Nandapia*, *Mombacho*, *Nandayme*, *Morati*, *Gotega*: in this province 12,607 souls were baptized; they gave 33,434 pesos of gold, all of it of very low grade.

"To this province of *Nochari* came the caciques of *Dirianjen*, and they brought a present amounting to 18,818 pesos of gold, mostly of very low grade, together with a little gold had from the caciques of *Nochari*.

"We went 12 leagues around the Gulf of Sant Lúcar by way of the domains of the caciques *Avancari* [Abangares] and *Cotori* before returning to the province of *Gurutina*."

11. Salteba (Jalteva) is today a suburb of Granada. Froebel (1859, p. 52) makes the interesting observation that the inhabitants are descendants of the Dirians, and that, in the bitter civil wars which have taken place in Nicaragua, they have sided with León against Granada, which has been supported by the Indians of Nahuatl extraction. It thus appears that the present political parties of Nicaragua show distinct affiliation to the pre-Spanish racial antagonisms of that country.

12. Remesal (lib. v, cap. xiii) states: "Vinieron antiguamente de la Provincia de Nicaragua unas gentes, que cansados de andar, y de las descomodidades que la peregrinacion trae consigo se quedaron en tierra de Chiapa, y poblaron en un peñol aspero orillas de un Rio grande que passa por media della, y fortificaronse alli, porque nunca se quisieron sujetar à los Reyes de Mexico" From this statement it may be argued that the Chiapanec reached their new homes after the Aztec had risen to power and extended their conquests to the south in the fifteenth century.

13. García (lib. v, cap. v) states: "Cuentan estos Indios, que vinieron sus Progenitores de àcia el Nuevo Mexico, i traxeron consigo dos, ò tres Dioses, que adoraban, i que en la Provincia de Soconusco se dividieron, por ciertas ocasiones, en dos partes: la una fue à poblar à la Provincia de Nicaragua: i la otra parte poblò en lo que aora llaman Provincia de Chiapa."

## CHAPTER II

### MATERIAL CULTURE

#### SOURCES

AS we have already seen that racial elements had entered Nicaragua and Costa Rica from both the north and the south, so also it appears that parts of the material culture are of northern and parts of southern affiliation. From the north were derived the types of dress used by the Chorotega (except the Orotiña), the Maribio, and the Nicarao; from the north came also the use of maize and cacao, and the custom of employing the latter as money; similarly the books of deerskin were of northern provenience, as also the cotton armor, and a sword type widely in use. From the south, however, came the house types used in all parts of the area, but most noticeably the tree houses. The dress of the Guetar and Orotiña was of southern derivation, as well as the use of the penis string and tattooing. To the south also we must refer the use of coca and of intoxicating drinks in excessive quantities.

In general, we may summarize by saying that the peoples of Nicaragua borrowed more from the north than from the south, and that the reverse was true of the tribes of Costa Rica.

The material presented below has been taken from descriptions of the country by eye-witnesses of the sixteenth century. The greatest source of information on Nicaragua is the forty-second book of Oviedo, who himself visited Nicaragua and Nicoya, and incorporated in his work the record of Francisco de Bobadilla. While Oviedo is of great importance, the value of his observations is diminished by his frequent failure to specify the tribe of which he writes. Thus many customs are attributed to both the Chorotega and the Nicarao through his lack of definition. Peter Martyr, although not an eye-witness, is an authority of the first rank because he was a personal friend of Cereceda, who accompanied the expedition of Gil González Dávila. Other writers of importance are Benzoni, Castañeda, Andagoya, García, and Motolinía, all of whom personally visited Nicaragua. Unfortunately no systematic description of the Indians of Costa Rica is extant, and what little data are given have been derived

from administrative documents or from records of conquest. Of special importance are the letters of Vásquez de Coronado and the writings of Agustín de Zavallos and Juan de Estrada Rávago. A translation of a letter of Zavallos to the King is given in Appendix II.

Owing to the limited amount of material available and the difficulty of access to it, I have chosen to quote rather than to paraphrase and condense. All the information of interest will therefore be found in the language of an eye-witness. On account of the uneven nature of the material available it is impossible to present a reasonably complete picture of the culture of any tribe except the Nicaraos. As Squier (1853) has already discussed these people as a unit, I have chosen to group the various cultural features of all the tribes, a method which serves to emphasize the interplay of Central American and South American features.

### HOUSES

*Chorotega* and *Nicarao*—Peter Martyr (p. 241) states that the ordinary houses were made of timbers covered with straw and had earthen floors; the temples, he says, were built in a similar manner, with many dark inner chapels where the nobles kept their household gods. The king's court he describes as one hundred paces long and fifteen broad, open in front but closed behind. "The pavements or floares of their pallaces are erected halfe a mans stature from the ground the rest, [*sic*] are nothing rayseed from the earth." Herrera (dec. III, p. 121) says that on some islands and rivers the houses were built in trees (fig. 4).

Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XIII) has left us a detailed description of the palace of the cacique Agateyte (pl. II), which we shall quote at length.

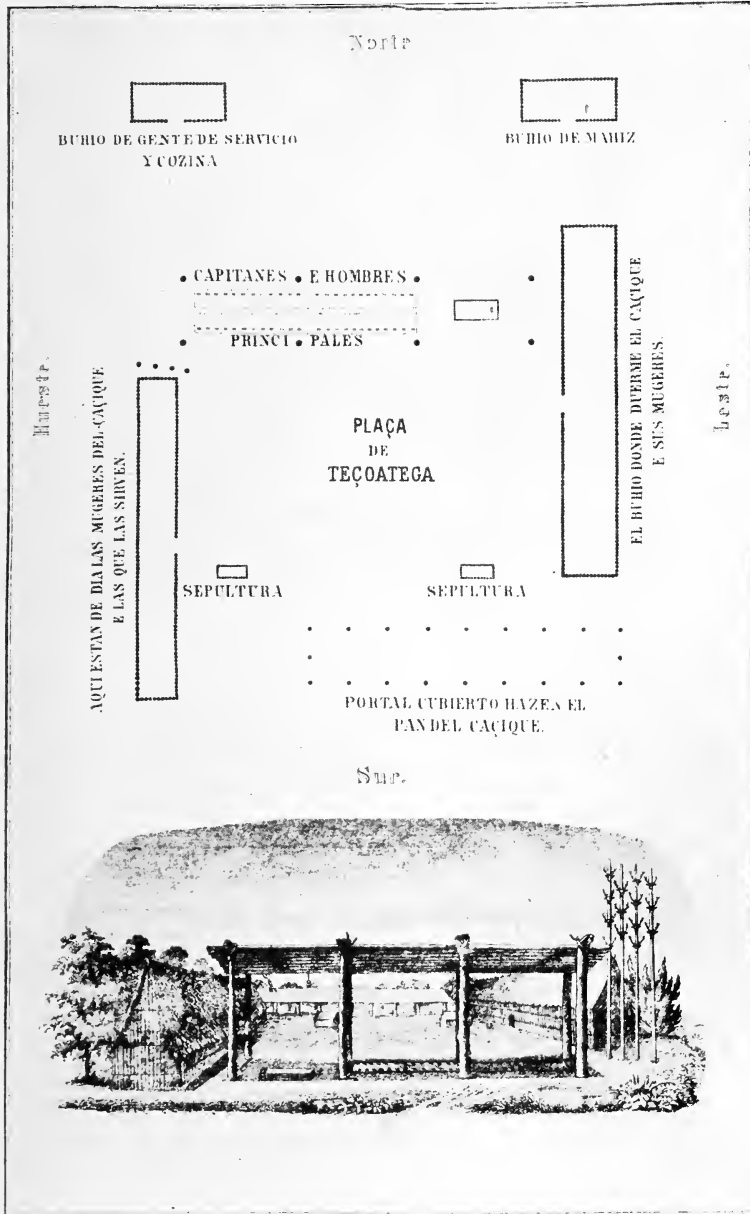
In Tecoa-tega there was a large *plaza*, in the shape of a square, at the entrance to which, on the right hand, was a large *buhio*, containing maize and provisions, after the fashion of a store-house; and, facing this, to the left of the same entrance, was another *buhio*, very large, and uncovered down to the ground, which might well have been a hundred paces in length, and where the *cacique* and his wives slept. And they build them thus, low and dark, for two purposes: one, that they may be the firmer against the hurricanes, and the earthquake, which is a common occurrence there; and they have no door nor window, for which reason they are very dark, save for one small door, which one must needs enter stooping; and this is always closed by day, so that mosquitoes may not go in, for there are many in that region.

Entering the *plaza*, and passing beyond these two *buhios*, one sees a portico which they call *barbacoa*, eighty paces or more in length, and ten in width,

having three aisles, and standing upon posts or beams of very good and strong wood, roofed with canes, flat and without any slope, and laid upon canes of the thick kind, in which each joint is as thick as the calf of one's leg, and very firmly bound in place. Which porch is for the purpose of shelter from the sun, and is placed from east to west, so that the sun may never strike upon its sides, save a little, and when it reaches the extremes of the tropics; so that the sun is almost constantly over the said portico, and when it rises in the morning, it does not penetrate the head thereof for more than a brief time, and even that is prevented by the fruit-bearing trees which stand in front of the *plaza*; and the same occurs at sunset, or from vespers on. And for the rains, straw is laid upon the canes, although in that region it rains seldom, and this also serves as a better defence against the sun, so that it cannot penetrate between the joinings of the canes. This portico is the usual residence of the *cacique*, in lieu of a house in which to hold his court; and on the side facing the east, seven or eight paces beneath this porch, is a couch, three palms high from the ground, made of the heavy canes I spoke of, and flat on the top, and ten or twelve feet in length, and five or six in width, and covered with a thick mat of palm leaves; and over that three other mats, thin and carefully worked, on top of which was stretched the *cacique*, naked, and with a mantle of white and thin cotton enveloping him; and as a pillow he had a small four-legged bench, somewhat concave, which they call *duho*, and of very handsome smooth wood, skilfully carved, at the head [see fig. 183]; and the upper end of this bedstead lay toward the east, and its foot toward the west. And upon a pole or post nearby hung a bow, and certain arrows, and a small calabash containing honey; and ten paces in front of the said couch two rows of mats were laid, in two ranks, along both naves, the length of many of them being more than thirty paces.

In the *buhio* of the covered portico, there are constantly forty or fifty slave-women, grinding or husking maize for the bread which the lord and his chiefs eat each day; the two small *buhios* were the burial places of two of the *cacique's* sons, who had died in childhood. At the farther end of the *plaza* were erected four canes, of the large species, and very tall, covered with the heads of deer, which the *cacique* himself had slain with his bow, which is a token of rank, and of dexterity with such a weapon. The house near the said canes is the *buhio* in which the wives of the *cacique* remain by day, with those who serve them; at night the chiefs sleep there; and the guard, which is without, in some *buhios* nearby, comes to keep watch in the *plaza*, with such and such a number of men standing sentries according to the hour, and with every quarter, the captain watches to whom the vigil or quarter pertains. The guard is continually in the *plaza* until the sun has been out a half-hour, and then they return to their quarters. It is curious to see the gravity which the *cacique* maintains, and the reverence in which he is held. Around the *plaza* and its *buhios* are many fruit-trees, such as plums and *mameys* and figs and other fruits of various kinds; and so many that the *plaza* and the *buhios* pertaining thereto cannot be seen until one approaches it closely.

*Corobici*—Padre Zepada (see Bancroft, 1875, p. 755) states that the Corobici had houses in the trees. In this custom we may see a



PLAN OF THE PALACE AT TECOATEGA, NICARAGUA  
(AFTER OVIEDO)



link with South America, for such houses were found by the Spaniards in the coastal regions of Colombia and Venezuela (fig. 4). The modern Guatuso Indians live in simple rectangular houses or sheds constructed of poles and thatch.

*Guatar* — No description of the southern Guetar houses is known, but archeological evidence shows that the houses of this region were similar to those in use until recently in Talamanca. This dwelling (pl. III) is a large conical structure of poles covered with thatch. Sapper (1904, p. 28) and Skinner (1920a, p. 47) have described these buildings in some detail.

Benzoni (p. 126) has described a house in the land of the Suerre as "shaped like an egg, in length about forty-five paces, and nine in breadth. It was encircled with reeds, covered with palm branches remarkably well interlaced; there were also a few other houses, but of a common sort." A reproduction of the sketch published by Benzoni is given in fig. 5.



FIG. 4.—A native tree house.  
(After Benzoni.)

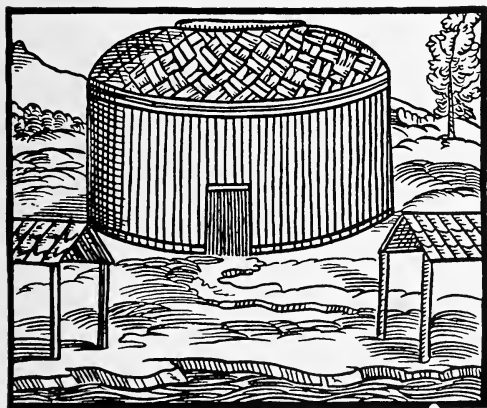


FIG. 5.—"A well-roofed house in the province of Suerre." (After Benzoni.)

## TOWNS

### *Nicarao and Chorotega*

—The towns were not compact, but the houses were widely scattered, as appears from the description of Managua by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. v), which consisted of "one plaza after another, with long intervals between them." The plazas were surrounded by the temples and the palaces of the cacique and nobles. Peter

Martyr (p. 241) states that there were large streets (plazas) in front of the king's court and also smaller ones in which trading took place. The nobles lived around the king's street, in the center of which the goldsmiths plied their trade.

*Guetar*—The villages of the Guetar were small, and in some cases consisted of only two or three communal houses.

### FOOD

*Chorotega* and *Nicarao*—"As to the fertility of this realm," writes Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII), "and the situation of the land itself, and its healthful and mild climate, and its excellent waters and fisheries, and its abundance of hunting and game, there is nothing in all the Indies which, feature for feature, surpasses it, and there are very few provinces which are equal to this one; because, as for food, it is more complete and abundant than in all those others which are known at present. . . ."

Agriculture was highly developed, and maize, all kinds of vegetables, as well as fruits, were grown in abundance. Cacao, of which

the nuts were used for money, was cultivated with great care (fig. 6).

Game was abundant, and Oviedo (loc. cit.) states that "of those which are good eating, there are many; stags and fallow deer, and cows which the Spaniards call *dantas* (tapirs), and many pigs and armadillos, and ant-eating bears (*pisotes*), and many other animals, and numerous rabbits and



FIG. 6.—The cacao tree and method of making fire in Nicaragua. (After Benzoni.)

hares, neither more nor less than those of Spain, but smaller." Also birds of every description were eaten. Fish was plentiful, both in the lakes and the rivers, and in the Pacific ocean.

Several delicious beverages were common, of which the cacao is well known. Intoxicating drinks were *mazamorra*, a mixture of honey and ground corn, and also a wine made from plums.



A MODERN BRIBRI HOUSE, COSTA RICA

NOTE THE COOKING-POT USED AS A CHIMNEY. (AFTER SKINNER)



Tobacco, which the Orotiña called *yapoquete*, was cultivated with care. The leaves were rolled up and secured with cotton threads and smoked in the form of cigars (see page 56).

The chewing of *coca* (called *yaat*, by the Nicaraos) and lime is a custom which centers in the Andean region, yet this practice seems to have been common in Nicaragua (Oviedo, lib. VI, *cap.* XX). The natives found relief from fatigue through this drug, and Gil González Dávila pointed out to the defeated Nicaraos that not only were the Spaniards better warriors than the natives, but also their endurance was greater, although they used no *yaat*.

Cannibalism was widespread. Although of ceremonial origin, it appears that the taste for human flesh had become highly developed, and that slaves were bred in captivity for consumption, just as any other domestic animal might be; also there is evidence that raids were conducted in hope of plunder and high living in the form of human flesh (see page 11). Castañeda (p. 49) details food raids of this type after the conquest. The preparation of the flesh and the attitude of the natives was thus explained to Fray Francisco de Bobadilla by the chiefs of the Nicaraos (Oviedo, lib. XLII, *cap.* III):

The head of the victim who must die is severed, and the body is cut into small pieces, and these are put to cook in large pots, and to this is added salt and pepper and whatever is necessary to dress it. When it is done, balls of maize are brought, and the *caciques* seat themselves on their *duhos* with much greedy merriment, and eat the flesh, and drink *mazamorra* and *cacao*. The head is neither cooked, nor roasted, nor eaten; but is placed on poles in front of the oratories and temples. Such is the ceremony with which we eat this meat, which tastes to us like turkey or pig or *xulo* (*id est*, those dogs of theirs), which among us is considered a very delicate viand; and we greatly prize this dish of human flesh. The entrails of those whom we eat thus, are given to the trumpeters, whom we call *escoletes*, and who sound their instruments when the *cacique* eats or feasts, or retires to sleep, as the Christians do for their great captains. The *escoletes* wash the entrails and eat them, as meat.

Domestic animals in common use were the turkey and *xulo*, or barkless dog, which Allen (1920) has identified as the raccoon. Among the Maribio, and presumably among the other peoples of Nicaragua, the flesh of the *xulo* was often preserved by drying in the fierce heat of the sun.

*Guatar*—In former times the Guatar had developed their agriculture to a high degree of perfection, and early writers speak of the

careful cultivation seen on the banks of San Juan river and the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica, a region of dense jungle today, except along the lines of the railroad. Cacao, maize, and various fruits were abundant, and the supply of game was plentiful.

The tapir, which was considered a special delicacy and reserved for the tables of the chiefs, was raised and perhaps bred in captivity.

### DRESS

*Nicarao*—Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. 1) describes the dress of the *Nicarao* as follows:

The men wear sleeveless tunics of fine cotton, with many colors interwoven, and thin girdles of white cotton as wide as one's hand, which they twist till they are as thick as, or thicker than, one's thumb; this girdle they wind many times round the body, from the breast down to the hips; and the end of which is left over they put between the buttocks, bringing it up in front, and covering their privy parts, and fasten it on one of the folds of the girdle; . . . The women wear skirts reaching nearly to the knee, and those of higher rank wear narrower skirts down to their ankles, and neck-cloths which cover their breasts.

The men wear shoes which they call *gutaras*, which are made of two soles of deerskin, and without tops, but fastened from the toes to the ankles with cotton cords or straps, in the manner of *alpargatas*.

Andagoya (p. 33) writes that the women had "mantles like those of Coiba (Panama), and another description of covering which, descending from the head, covered the bosom and half the arms."

*Nahuatlato*—Alonso Ponce (I, p. 352) found that the women of El Viejo, and indeed all the women between Nacaome and Managua, "wore, instead of the *huipil*, little capes with two peaks, one behind and the other in front, without sleeves."

*Gueta*r—Columbus, on his fourth voyage to the New World, cast anchor at the village of Cariay, which there is reason to believe lay in the territory of the *Gueta*r.<sup>15</sup> There he found the inhabitants clad in breech-clouts of bark, and they offered mantles and sleeveless jackets to the Spaniards. Bancroft (1875, vol. 1, p. 751) states that the men on the Pacific coast near Herradura wore mantles of bark, with a hole in the center, covering the front and back of the body, while the women wrapped themselves in a piece of bark without troubling to fashion a garment.

In the vicinity of Cartago the men tied a few threads of cotton about the prepuce of the penis, a custom distinctly connected with South America.

*Corobici*—Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII) says that the women of the Corobici wore breech-clouts and the rest of the person was bare.

*Choluteca* and *Manguc*—The only description of the dress of these tribes is the account of the dress of the Nahuatlato already quoted, yet it is evident that Oviedo intended to include the Mangue, at any rate, in his description of the Nicaraos.

*Orotiña*—Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XI), writing of the Nicoyans, says:

But the costume and dress of these people is the same as that worn by the Indians of *Mexico* and those of *León de Nagrando*; those long girdles wound round the body, and tunics of colored cotton, without sleeves. The women wear an elaborately worked breech-clout, which is an apron about three spans wide caught on a single string, at the back; and this string being tightened, they bring the cloth between the legs, covering the privy parts, and insert the end beneath the string in front. All the remainder of their bodies is unclothed; . . .

"El miembro generativo," writes Oviedo (lib. XXIX, cap. XXI), "traen atado por el capullo, haciendole entrar tanto adentro, que á algunos no se les paresce de tal arma sino la atadura, que es unos hilos de algodón allí revueltos." Oviedo states that this custom, which is found in eastern South America, was prevalent among the Indians of the Gulf of Nicoya, but was not practised by the inhabitants of Chira. The Isthmian tribes in many instances wore a bright-colored shell secured around the loins with cords. (See Andagoya, p. 9.)

*Maribio*—The *Relación* of Alonso Ponce states that the women of Pozolteca, a Maribio town, wore the Mexican *huipil*.

## ORNAMENTATION AND DECORATION

*Nicarao*—Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. I) states:

The men shave the front part of their heads, and the sides downward, leaving a lock from ear to ear, just back of the crown. He among them who has won some hand-to-hand combat, in sight of the armies, is called *tapaliqui*; in token of his victory, he shaves his head completely, except for a three-cornered crown on the top, the hair of this crown being about as long as the space between the middle and tip of one's forefinger, so as to denote his rank by its length; in the center of this crown is a still longer tuft of hair, which resembles a tassel; these warriors appear to be greatly distinguished and honored among all these three peoples—*Nicaraguas*, *Chorolegas*, and *Chondales*.

In cap. XII of the same book Oviedo continues:

In the province of *Nicaragua* and its vicinity, the Indians take great pride in keeping their hair carefully combed, and they fashion combs with barbs made from the bones of deer, so white as to resemble marble, and they make other

black ones, of strong and very excellent wood, and they are good, and are after the fashion of coarse combs, with the teeth wide apart. And their barbs or teeth they set in a certain paste, which resembles baked clay, and some of these settings are red and some black; but both the ones and the others are the dung and filth which bats evacuate, in regard to which many Indians whom I questioned were agreed. And I have had several of these combs, and I brought six or seven of them from that country to this city of *Sancto Domingo*; on nearing the fire, the paste becomes soft as wax, and it burns easily and rapidly; and on cooling, it is very stiff, and fastens the said teeth of the combs as though it were iron.

Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. I) further remarks:

They are accustomed to pierce their tongues from beneath, and also their ears, and some of them scarify the genital member; and the women do none of this, but both sexes pierce their ears with large holes; . . . The women wear many strings of beads and other things around their necks.

Tattooing is described by Oviedo (loc. cit.) as follows:

They also stain their bodies by cutting into the flesh with knives of flint, and pouring in the wounds powder made from a certain black coal, which they call *tiel* (indigo), and the stains are as enduring as the life of the person thus marked. Each *cacique*, or lord, has his own brand or mark of this kind, by which his followers are to be recognized; and there are masters of the art, who are very dexterous, and who live by it.

Body painting was common and very elaborate on ceremonial occasions. Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XIII) observes that the lord of Tecoa-tega was painted "body and arms and legs and neck and throat."

Cranial deformation was practised commonly. In early childhood a depression was made along the center of the skull from front to back. The natives explained the practice thus (Oviedo, lib. XLII, cap. III): "Our forefathers were told by our gods that in this way we would be good to look at, and our heads would be better adapted to the burdens we carry."

*Gueta*r—At Cariari (Cariay), Ferdinand Columbus (p. 667) found that the men had their hair braided and wound about their heads, and the women wore theirs short like the Spaniards. Benzoni (p. 132) says that the men painted their bodies with black and red, and that they were brilliantly decorated with feathers. Gold figurines similar to the well-known Chiriqui types were worn attached to the arms or legs, or suspended from the neck.

*Chorotega*—Of the Indians of Nicoya, Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XI) writes:

Their hair is long, and caught up in two braids, for they comb it in halves by means of a part of the center; and one braid is directly over one ear, and

the other with the remaining half of the hair, over the other ear; and with their hair thus tightly fastened, they have braids three and four spans in length, and more, and less, according as the hair is long or short. [See fig. 155, *b*.]

As before stated, the Chorotegan warriors wore a distinguishing lock of hair, as did the Nicaraos and the Chontals.

The Indians of this district of *Nicoya* pierce their lower lip, between the chin and the mouth, and in the opening they insert a white bone, round and about the size of a half-real; and some wear, instead of the bone, a button of hammered gold, and fasten it inside the mouth; and as the fastening and the neck of the button meet against the lower teeth, the larger the bulk they form, the more prominent does the lower lip become; and if they so desire, these buttons may be removed to eat and drink. [Oviedo, loc. cit.]

A picture of the splendor of the nobles is painted by Oviedo (lib. XXIX, cap. XXI), who thus describes the visit of the cacique Diriajen to the camp of Gil González Dávila:

He brought with him up to five hundred men, and each one male or female turkeys in their hands; and behind them were ten pennants or little flags on staffs, and all were white; and behind these pennants were seventeen women, all nearly covered with medals of gold and two hundred or more little axes of low-grade gold which weighed altogether more than eighteen thousand *pesos*. And still farther behind, near the *calachuni*<sup>16</sup> and his principal retainers, came five trumpeters or fifers.

## TEXTILES

Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. 1) writes that in Nicaragua there was "a great abundance of cotton, and much and fine clothing which is made therefrom, and it is spun and woven by the Indian women of the country; and it is a yearly crop, for each year they sow and pick it." Cotton textiles of a superior quality were made by the Guetars, while the Orotiñan textiles were highly prized by the Spaniards, owing to the beauty of the dyes used. Especially prized was the thread (called *pita*) dyed with the juices extracted from *Purpura patula*, which yielded a very soft and beautiful purple commonly called Tyrian purple. The threads to be dyed were taken to the seaside and a few drops were squeezed upon it from shellfish which afterward were returned unharmed to the sea, while the thread, upon exposure to the air, assumed the proper color. This laborious process was used in all parts of the Pacific coast of Middle America in aboriginal times. It is still employed in Guatemala, where cotton thread with this dye exceeds in value silk thread colored with modern commercial

dyes. However, it seems that this dye was most skilfully used among the Orotiña (see Gage, p. 191, and Nuttall).

The people of western Nicaragua to this day are reputed skilful in the weaving of mats and hammocks, and other articles of vegetal fiber. Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII) has testified to their former skill, and states that in addition to the usual varieties of *agave*, they extracted the fibers from the leaves of palm trees, from which they made nets, and they used also the rather stiff fibers of a thistle called *ozpanguaste* for making brooms.

## POTTERY

All the peoples under consideration had attained some skill in the making of pottery, as a further examination of this work will show. Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII) has praised the pottery made on the island of Chira in the Gulf of Nicoya in the following words:

They make very handsome earthenware, plates and bowls and jugs and jars and other vessels, very well molded [modeled], and black as fine black velvet, and with a glaze like that of highly polished jet; and I brought to this city of *Sancto Domingo*, of the Island of *Hispaniola*, several pieces of this ware, which, for their beauty, might be a gift for a prince; and the Indians make them of the proportion and shape which is asked of them or ordered.

Castañeda (p. 54) also speaks of "cántaros e ollas e platos de barro negro que labran muy bueno," and López de Velasco (p. 329) states that the inhabitants of Chira paid a yearly tribute of four hundred pottery vessels.

## GOLD

Gold ornaments were common and were probably manufactured locally to a certain extent even in those regions where gold had to be imported. Of the Guetar we are told (Fernández, Documentos, v, p. 158) that they made "eagles, alligators, toads, spiders, medals, *patines*, and other artifacts" of impure gold, "pouring in their molds the gold melted in crucibles of clay." In form, however, it must be granted that the Talamancan gold objects dominated all of Central America. Chiriqui was one of the chief sources of gold in aboriginal times, and the smiths of that region were scarcely surpassed in their technical ability. Hence it followed that with the actual gold-dust manufactured objects from Chiriqui were widely distributed throughout Central America, and they have been found even as far north as Chichen Itza in Yucatan (pl. LXXVIII, i).

## BOOKS

Herrera has stated that the Chorotega alone possessed the art of writing, but he is probably in error, for it is to be supposed that the Nicarao brought this knowledge to Nicaragua from Mexico, although it is possible that the Chorotega acquired the art from the Maya or the Pipil before the arrival of the Nicarao. The books used in Nicaragua are described by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. 1) in the following words:

They had books of parchment, which they made from the skins of deer, a handbreadth or more in width, and ten or twelve paces long, or more, or less, which they doubled and folded, a handwidth to each fold, one over the other (in the manner of a legal claim); and in these they painted their characters or figures, in red or black ink, in such a way that, though they were neither reading nor writing, they expressed and understood very clearly by them all they desired; and in these books they painted their boundaries and inheritances, and all else that they thought should be recorded, such as the roads, the rivers, the mountains, and woods, and the rest, so that in times of strife or dispute they might make their decisions thereby, according to the opinions of the old men, or *guegues* (*guegue* meaning "old man").

## BOATS

The same authority (lib. XXIX, cap. XXI) states that the Orotiña used dugout canoes, with the exception of the inhabitants of Chara and Pocosi, who used a "*balsa* of four or six beams lashed at the ends and in the center, with other smaller logs placed crosswise, and the binding . . . of the grass rope of that land." The blades of the paddles were formed by two rows of large pearl oysters set in opposite sides of the shaft.

The canoes of Fonseca bay, described in the *Relación* of Alonso Ponce (I, p. 375), came from Nacaome, and therefore were the property of the Choluteca. They are described as a yard and a half wide and deep, and not very long. The oars were like the shafts of spears, with boards nailed on the ends to form the blade. Sails made of cotton cloth or of mats were occasionally used, though it is questionable if this method of propulsion antedated the advent of the Spaniards. Eight oarsmen were assigned to each canoe, and they rowed standing up. From this description it appears that the methods of navigation have changed but little on these waters since aboriginal times. The accompanying drawing (fig. 7), from a photograph taken off Tigre island in 1917, shows a short, broad boat, rowed by eight standing oarsmen, much in the manner seen by Alonso Ponce.

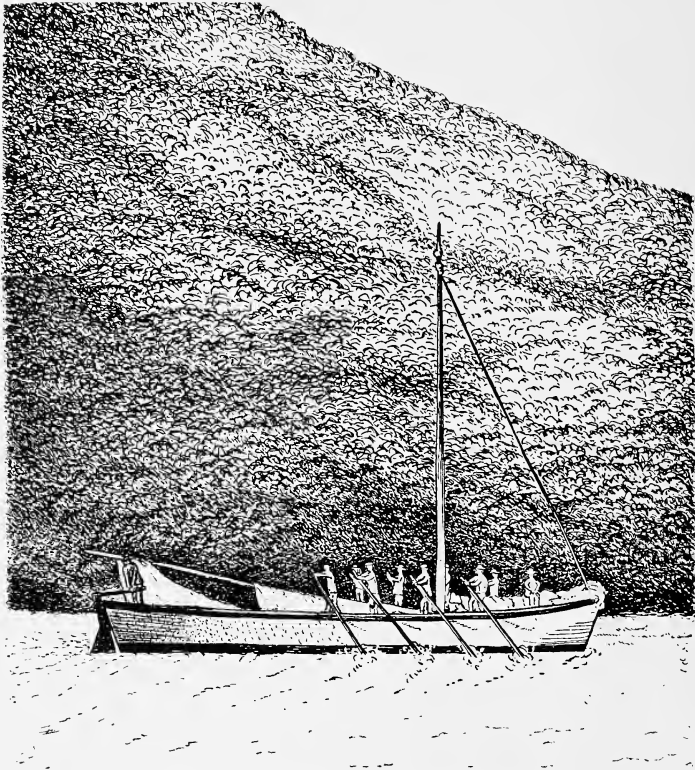


FIG. 7.—Modern boat on Fonseca bay.

### WEAPONS

*Chorotega* and *Nicarao*—Speaking of the attack on the forces of Gil González Dávila by subjects of the chieftain Niqueragua, Oviedo (lib. XXIX, cap. XXI) says the natives were “armed after their fashion with sleeveless doublets or cuirasses of bastard cotton and with heads covered by the same material, and shields and swords of stout wood, and many of them with bows and arrows (although they have no poison) and others with throwing-sticks (*varas para tirar*).”

A armor of quilted cotton stiffened by immersion in brine was in wide use throughout Mexico and Central America at the time of the advent of the Spaniards, who have testified to its efficiency. The type of helmet in use is shown in figurines (pl. cxc, *a*; fig. 263). The doublets usually covered the body only to the waist, but some-

times they covered also the thighs. Peter Martyr (p. 241) speaks of golden breast-plates and helmets, a statement suggestive of Colombian armor types.

"The shields," writes Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. III), "are of the bark of trees or of light wood, covered with plumes and featherwork and cotton cloth; and so made that they are very light, and strong, and good to look at . . . and the spears are tipped with flint, or sharp fish-bones; and they are made of reed-grasses (of which there are many on the shores of the lake)." The term "*varas para tirar*," quoted above, probably means the *atlatl*, or throwing-stick, yet it is possible that it has reference to the boomerang, which is not unknown, though of rare occurrence in the Americas. The description (see page 57) of testing the warriors' courage by pelting them with sticks furnishes ground for the thought that these youths faced an ordeal differing from actual warfare only in its severity.

The clubs in use were probably not of the Mexican type, i.e., a flat blade the edges of which were set with flint or obsidian, but resembled those of Colombia and the Isthmus, which were bruising but not cutting weapons. In the Peninsula of Nicoya a study of the archeological remains shows that stone-headed clubs (pl. x) were in use. They were made in the form of a conventionalized animal, or circular, or star-shape. Their presence in this area must be regarded as the result of influence from the west coast of South America. It is said that these people were expert archers. Their bows were made of a strong flexible wood.

Slings were known in Nicaragua (see page 53), but there is no report of their use in war.

Peter Martyr (p. 241) tells us that the temples were used as armories, and that large supplies of weapons were kept on hand.

*Guetar*—The principal offensive weapons were stones and lances. Benzoni (p. 133) states that they hurled stones with sufficient force to dent the steel helmets of the Spaniards.<sup>17</sup> Ferdinand Columbus (p. 608) says that the lances were of "Palm-Tree, as black as a Coal, and hard as a horn, pointed with the bones of fishes." He adds that some of the men carried bows and arrows, and others clubs. A small pottery figure was found by Skinner at Las Mercedes (pl. cxc, a), representing a warrior with a cotton helmet and shield. I am inclined to attribute the use of cotton armor to the Guetar, as they are known to have been skilful weavers of cotton.

## NOTES

15. The village of *Cariay*, or *Cariari*, at which Columbus landed on his fourth voyage, has been placed in Nicaragua by most historians. This I believe to be erroneous, and think it certain that it was situated near Puerto Limón for the following reasons:

(a) As pointed out by Fernández (1889, pp. 524-525), Diego de Porras gives the total distance from Cabo Gracias to the Island of Escudo as 194 leagues, which is approximately correct. Cariay is said to be only 57 leagues from Escudo. From this it follows that Cariay was at the mouth of the Rio Reventazón, if Columbus sailed direct, and at Puerto Limón if, as is quite likely, he followed the shore of the Chiriqui lagoon.

(b) Columbus captured two Indians at Cariay who were able to talk with the other natives as far as Zorobaro island in Almirante bay, showing that these Indians were Rama, Suerre, Guetar, or Talamanca, and not Mosquito.

(c) Cariay was marked by the beauty of the mountains. This could not be true of the Nicaraguan coast, nor of the mouth of the San Juan river, nor the Colorado bar.

(d) Cariay lay opposite the Island of Quiribri. There is an island, Uvita, opposite Limón.

(e) A document dated 1675 (Fernández, Colección de Documentos, VIII, 348) states of Limón: "Muy cerca de este portete entra un rio que llaman del Caray [Carey] que forma una baía grande con la entrada breve y corta, y en ella se forma una isleta muy a proposito para fortificación."

(f) The Talamanca Indians today call Puerto Limón by the name *Querey*. See Thiel in *Gaceta de Costa Rica*, no. 118, Nov. 18, 1900.

(g) Columbus describes the river as large, while the Limón or Cieneguita is small. Ricardo Fernández Guardia (1913, p. 30, n.), however, asserts that there is reason to believe that this stream once drained the waters of the Rio Banano.

16. The word *calachuni* Brinton (1883, p. ix, n. 5) derives from the Maya *halach uinic*, "holy man". He explains its presence in Nicaragua on the basis that it was adopted by the Spaniards and promiscuously applied as was the Haytian word *cacique*. This explanation seems improbable to the writer, because Oviedo visited Nicaragua and Costa Rica in 1528, while the conquest of Yucatan was not undertaken until the end of that year and Oviedo himself (lib. xxxii, cap. ii) explicitly states that he met no survivors of Montejo's campaigns until 1541. The brief visits to Yucatan of Hernández de Córdoba, Juan de Grijalva, and Hernando Cortés could scarcely explain the adoption of a Maya term for general use by the Spaniards.

17. Juan Vásquez de Coronado (1908, p. 55) writes that the ill-fated expedition of Diego Gutiérrez was overwhelmed in the Valley of Tayut in the Province of Tayutic, which was only five leagues from Cartago. In other words, this defeat took place in the Guarco region and not in that of the Suerre. Benzon's description, therefore, applies to the inland and not to the coast tribes.

## CHAPTER III

### MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

#### SOURCES

O VIEDO (lib. XLII, cap. 1), who has left us more detailed information on the practices of the Nicaraguans than all other writers combined, discussing the Nicarao, states:

Those of the *Chorotega* tongue, who are their enemies, have the same kind of temples; but their language, and rites, and various ceremonies and customs are of a different form, so that they cannot understand each other. In like manner, the *Chondales* differ in their tongue from both the above-mentioned, and there is no communication between them, nor is there more resemblance than between a Biscayan and a Teuton.

However, when we come to examine Oviedo's text—and this is true also of the other early historians—we find that it is extremely difficult and often quite impossible to decide what tribes he is discussing.

In general, it appears that in Nicaragua there were two disseminators of culture, the Nicarao and the Chorotega, but in the course of time these peoples had borrowed from each other enough to blur the sharpness of definition, so that many customs attributed to both would, on closer examination, prove to have belonged originally to only one of them. The lesser tribes of Nicaragua, the Maribio and those east of the two lakes, have sunk into oblivion with scarcely a surviving word of description. The Maribio undoubtedly lived in a manner similar to that of their Mangué neighbors, and the Ulva also probably reflected the culture of the Pacific coast, but not in its full development.

The origin of the customs discussed below is in the main obscure, for the majority of practices recorded belong in common to both Mexico and Colombia. Among such features are the general conceptions of rank and privilege, the semi-feudal governmental system, warrior castes, trade and market regulations, etc. Certain features, however, are definitely Mexican in character, among which should be mentioned voluntary slavery, the appointment of war chiefs, the use of cacao for money, the "fliers" game (*voladores*), methods of edu-

cation, the legal code, etc. South American influence appears in the position of women in the household, and the excessive use of intoxicants. Finally, certain practices are peculiar to this region, such as the marriage of prostitutes, the game of *comelagatoazte*, testing the warrior's courage by throwing sticks at him, the exclusion of men from the market, the use of tapirs and copal as money, etc.

### RANK

*Nicarao* and *Chorotega*—Three social classes existed among the ancient inhabitants of Nicaragua: nobles, commoners, and slaves. These groups were hereditary, but apparently the individual could better his social condition by acquiring wealth or by gaining distinction in council or in war. The priesthood also seems to have formed a special and privileged caste, which was probably recruited largely from the nobility.

The great nobles were almost a race apart from the common people, and were grouped about various chiefs and subchiefs in a well-organized feudal system. Oviedo writes (lib. XLII, cap. I):

In some localities there are lords or princes, who rule over large tracts of land, and many people; thus the *cacique* of *Tecoatega*, and he of *Mistega*, and of *Nicaragua* and *Nicoya*, and others, have their principal vassals and warriors (I mean men who are heads of provinces or towns, with dominion over vassals of their own), whom they call *galpones*; and these usually accompany and guard the person of the prince, and are his courtiers and captains; and the lords and their chiefs are greatly revered, and their natures are very cruel and merciless; and they are great liars, and have no piety.

A picture of the domestic life of a great chieftain is not without interest, hence we quote Oviedo's description (lib. XLII, cap. XIII) of a meal of the *cacique* Agateyte, lord of *Tecoatega*:

While I was there, they brought food to the *cacique* and as to a man subjugated and enslaved, and not as when the land was prosperous and free from Christians; for between what I saw and what it had formerly been, the difference was as that between the meat of hare and of deer, and between the fare of a great prince and that of one of his mean or common vassals, or between white and black. And it is very easy to judge of it, for there came a solitary Indian woman, and she bore a three-legged vessel of clay, filled with fish, and a gourd with cakes of maize, and another with water, and placed it in the aisle toward the south, or toward the portico where his bread is made; and, having placed the aforesaid viands on the ground, six or seven paces from the bench upon which he was lying, in the other nave, in the middle of the portico, the woman withdrew, and the *cacique* arose and took up the small bench which he

had at the head of his couch, and carried it in his hands, and seated himself upon it, beside his meal. And as soon as he was seated, the same woman returned, and gave him water with which to wash his hands, and he washed his hands and face, and ate at his leisure. And as soon as the *cacique* began to eat, other women brought food to the chiefs, of the same kind of fish, and the greater part of them sat down to eat together, upon the small benches around them, placed between the mats, in the middle of the portico, or *barbacoa*; and several others of the said chiefs remained lying down, and but few ate, and these were the farthest down from those who were apart from the said bench. I cannot say whether this was because they were indisposed on account of sickness, or because the worth of their persons was less.

When the *cacique* had eaten, he rose and went out alone from the *plaza*, either because it seemed good to him to do so, or for some natural evacuation, or because such was his custom. And meanwhile, the Indian woman who had brought him food carried away the fragments of the meal, and the vessels and gourds in which she had brought it; and the *cacique* having returned, he picked up his small bench, or *duho*, and placed it upon the couch, and lay down, stretched out as he had been before, his feet toward the chiefs; who, in like manner, when they had finished eating, again lay down in their accustomed places.

Slaves were usually prisoners of war, and their lot was a hard one, for, after a period of toil, they were often sacrificed to the gods and eaten. A second type of slavery, a form found also in Mexico, is described by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. III) as follows:

When a man is in great want, and has sold all that he has, it sometimes happens that a father will sell his children; and one may even sell himself for any price he wishes; but they may ransom each other only with the consent of the owners of such slaves, and by no other means.

That this custom was frequently practised, however, seems unlikely, for Oviedo also tells us that beggars asked for alms at the houses of the rich, and what they asked was "always given them out of pity for their poverty," and also that they might "have good to say of the donor."

*Guetar*—These tribes were divided into three classes: nobles, commoners, and slaves. A feudal system was prevalent probably in all parts of the Guetar area. The slaves were women and boys captured in war, for the men thus taken were sacrificed.

## GOVERNMENT

*Nicarao* and *Chorotega*—Two types of government existed in Nicaragua, one essentially democratic, the other tending toward des-

potism. The first form, more typical perhaps of the Chorotega, is thus described by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. I) :

There are large numbers of people, as well in the province of *Nagrande*, where the city of *León* is, as in others of that realm; and many of them are not governed by *caciques* and a supreme lord, but after the fashion of communities, by a certain number of old men selected by vote; and these appointed a captain-general to deal with matters pertaining to war, who then governed their state with the rest of them; and when he met his death or was slain in some battle or skirmish, they chose another, and sometimes they themselves killed him, if they found that he was a menace to their republic. Subsequently, the Christians, in order to make use of Indians, and to deal with one chief instead of many, did away with this excellent custom; and since these senates or assemblies were composed of men of influence and lords of various *plazas* and vassals, and concurred in all matters as one will, the Christians dissolved them, and put *caciques* in their stead, for the *repartimientos* and to complete the new subjection in which the Spaniards placed them; notwithstanding which, there still remained *caciques* in some localities, and lords of provinces and islands.

The second type of government tended toward feudal despotism. At the head of the state was the *cacique* (called *teyte* by the Nicaraos), who probably came by his office through the hereditary-elective system prevalent among many semicivilized tribes. In addition there was a council (called *monexicos*) composed of various elders (*guegues*), who were elected for a term of four moons. The *cacique* theoretically could not act unless supported by the *monexicos*, which could not meet unless summoned by the *cacique*. The *monexicos* appointed various officials, presumably from their own number, and these were paid for their services in maize, cacao, or mantles.

The following quotations from Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII) give further details of this form of government :

Among others of the customs of this people, one appears to me to be just and honest; thus, when the *caciques* must provide something for their armies and warfare, or when some gift must be presented to the Christians, or some unusual expenditure must be made. And it is that the *cacique* and his chiefs enter their *monexico* or council house, and cast lots (after what is to be given has been agreed upon) to decide on which of them will fall the duty of providing it, and distributing it throughout all the vicinity, and seeing that it is done in the manner ordained in the *monexico*, and thus it is carried out, without any detail being omitted.

In the palace of Tecoatega, it will be remembered, the nobles lay in silence on the ground in front of the *cacique* Agateyte.

To these the *cacique* gives his commands, telling them what they must do; and the one to whom he thus gives orders rises, and approaches the

*cacique* to hear his will, and goes on the instant to perform it, if it is something for which he must go in person; and if not, and he must command it of others, that captain or chief goes outside the *plaza*, toward a number of houses and *buhios* which lie about a stone's throw from the plaza, or gives a shout or two; and from those houses come running ten or twelve men of the guard which is always there, and provides what is necessary; for of the Indians and servants of these chiefs, ten or twelve belonging to each one are continually there. And in the shout which he gives when he calls, he utters only his own name, so that those who come forth may be his own, and not of the other captains and chiefs; and, his mission fulfilled, he returns to his place in the shed or porch, where he was before, in attendance on the *cacique*. . . . When some messenger arrives, or brings an embassy, he does not communicate his purpose in coming to the *cacique*, but to one of the aforesaid chiefs, who lays it before the *cacique*, though he be present, in order that he may hear the news, and express his will; and he does so, instantly, and in few words, in the manner which has been described, giving what commands seem to him most fitting for the case, to one or more of these captains; and if it is an affair of great importance, he immediately takes council with all of them, and that is settled upon which is the most advantageous to his state and person. [Lib. XLII, cap. XIII.]

The messengers of the *cacique* are described by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. I) as follows:

In their methods of government they differ greatly; and the messengers and chiefs are taken at their word in all that they say or the commands which they give the rest, on the part of their lord, so long as they carry in their hands a fan of feathers (like the justice's wand among the Christians), and this fan the chief gives into the hands of him whom he sees will serve him best, for as long as it may please him that that man should be his officer. In the islands of the Gulf of *Orotiña* and some other places, they use long rods of very handsome wood, having at the top a hollow filled with small sticks, so that, the rod being moved by vibrating or shaking the arm, with the point fixed in the ground, the sound is similar to that of the toys filled with small stones which are used to soothe children; and one of these messengers carries such a rod to the *plaza* of a town; and immediately the people gather to see what is wanted; and, having placed the wand in the aforesaid position, he cries in a loud voice: "Come! Come! Come!" After repeating this three times in his tongue, he gives them their lord's commands in the form of a proclamation, and immediately takes his departure; and be it peace or war, they carry out whatever is commanded them, without omitting a single detail, or diverging from the manner in which they have been ordered to proceed. These rods take the place of fans, which, as has been said, are carried by the others, and are looked on as the insignia of the chieftainship; and on returning with the reply, they put the wand with the dozen or so others which are kept near the prince, for this or other purposes; and he gives them out with his own hand, at such times as it suits him to do so.

*Guetar*—A feudal system of government existed among the Guetar. In the province of Guarco the divisions were small, while in the west, in the province of Garabito, it appears that the system was more highly organized. In general, it may be said that the Guetar, when suddenly confronted by the Spaniards, had entered on a period of expansion and conquest, and, as a result, their original patriarchal, small, semi-independent groups were rapidly becoming welded under the leadership of the more powerful and aggressive chieftains.

The Voto, says Juan Vásquez de Coronado (p. 18), were governed by a *cacica*, i.e., a woman, whose husband appears to have been a prince consort after the modern European fashion, and to have exercised but little authority.

## WAR

*Nicarao* and *Chorotega*—The peoples of Nicaragua were frequently at war with one another, and warfare was a highly developed art, of which many details resembled the practices of the peoples of Mexico. The young men were carefully trained and organized in companies which stood regular watch and were constantly ready for battle.

The causes of war Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. III) states to have been principally boundary disputes; but it is probable that the desire to obtain slaves for sacrifice also played a part. Declaration of war was by a messenger, whose method of procedure has been described.

In Mexico the so-called emperor was in reality the war-chief, whose powers had extended in other directions with the growth of the importance of war. In Nicaragua, however, the cacique did not even accompany the army unless he were an exceptionally brave man, and the leader was appointed by the council or by the cacique with the approval of the council. If this leader were killed and the cacique present, he instantly appointed another leader or took command himself; otherwise immediate rout ensued. The duties of the war-chief consisted in directing the operations of battle and exhorting his men "to slay as many of the enemy as they can and to sever their opponents' limbs and heads, and not to flee." (Oviedo, loc. cit.)

This statement shows that the conduct of battle differed from that of the Aztec, for in the Mexican area the primary purpose of war was to capture the enemy alive for sacrifice. Thus great honor was bestowed on the warrior who brought home a captive, while little at-

tention was paid to the man who had slain his opponent. In Nicaragua, however, from the exhortation quoted above and from other sources, it is evident that the Aztec attitude toward war was not prevalent.

After a battle, the cacique, provided he had not accompanied the troops, went out to meet them. If the issue were successful, he received them with great demonstrations of joy, and some of the captives were immediately sacrificed. If the army were defeated, the cacique wept before them, and the chief captains went to the sacrificial mound and "shed tears very sadly."

Disobedience in battle was severely punished: the offender was deprived of his arms and severely beaten; he might be exiled, and his captain could even kill him. Valor was rewarded by admission to various warrior classes, as in Mexico and Colombia. The peculiar manner of wearing the hair affected by the *tapaligui*, the men who had vanquished an enemy in single combat in sight of the two armies, has received comment (page 37).

*Guetar*—The Guetar, says the *Relación* of Alonso Ponce (I, p. 350), "are valiant and much given to war after their fashion," and indeed they lived in a constant state of war, for sacrifices were held at every moon, and for these it was necessary to obtain captives. In the Province of Guarco the villages seem to have been small and to have preyed on one another constantly. The more important groups, such as Pacaca, Asseri, and Garabito, undertook raids at considerable distances from their homes and held whole provinces in subjection.

## TRADE

*Nicarao* and *Chorotega*—The exchange of commodities was organized in Nicaragua on an elaborate basis, but the semi-military merchants' guild of the Aztec had no counterpart, for trading was carried on principally by the women and boys.

Each town had a market, which the Nicarao called *tianguetz* and which was controlled by two officials, selected by each *monexico*, one of whom was always present in the *tianguetz*. "And those faithful ones are judges," says Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII), "and absolute governors within the plazas, so as not to permit the use of force, or short measures, or that the contracting parties should give less than they ought to give or exchange, in their sales and barter; and they chastise without remission those who transgress their ordinances and

customs, and they compel more courtesy and a better welcome to be afforded to strangers, so that increasing numbers may attend their traffic."

Elsewhere (lib. XLII, cap. III) Oviedo states :

The prices are regulated by the wishes of the parties concerned; thus each person bargains and sells as best he can. But no man may enter the *tianguetz* (or market place) of his native town, either to buy or to sell, or for any other purpose, nor may he stand looking in from the outside; if he does so, he is sworn at, and were he to enter, anyone who happened to be passing would consider him a rogue, and beat him. But all the women go to the *tianguetz* with their goods, and men and women who are strangers and come from other towns may enter there without difficulty. But this custom is not general for all strangers, but is valid only between allies and confederates. All kinds of women go to the said markets, and even boys may do so (provided they have had no intercourse with women). There slaves, gold, mantles, maize, fish, rabbits, and many kinds of birds are sold; and all else which we trade, sell or buy amongst ourselves, both of that which we have in our own country, and that which is brought from elsewhere.

The bases of exchange were maize, cotton, and cacao. The last was regularly employed as money in the greater part of Middle America. In Nicaragua this form of currency was falsified by carefully extracting the kernel and filling the shell with earth.

*Guetar*—Slaves, cotton, and gold were the principal articles of trade. The bases of exchange were tapirs, wild pigs, a kind of copal, and shell money. A tapir was worth twenty golden pesos; a small calabash full of copal or a string of shell beads extending from the ground as high as a man could reach were each worth one tapir.

## AGRICULTURE

Agriculture was highly developed. Benzoni (p. 149) describes the cultivation of cacao in Nicaragua and tells how the fruit tree was carefully shaded by a larger tree, the head of which was bent over the smaller one to protect it from the direct rays of the sun (fig. 6). This method is still followed. Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII) describes an interesting method of forcing maize by hand irrigation, as follows :

And it is that when the rains are delayed, for the maize fields, the Indians have some grain selected and laid aside, and they sow it, and sprinkle it by hand each day, and keep it very clean, and at the end of forty days they reap it, and it abounds in grain and is good. But, as it is troublesome to cure, and as the ears which it gives are small, similarly, what is reaped by this method is small in quantity; but great is the relief and aid it furnishes for the suste-

nance of the people, enabling them to wait the arrival of the other, which springs up with the rains.

Benzoni states that the natives had high sheds in the fields from which they drove away the birds by slinging stones.

### GAMES

*Nicarao* and *Chorotega*—Only two games of these people have been recorded, one of Mexican origin, and one which appears to be a local development. The game commonly called *voladores*, or fliers, is well known in Mexico, and also was found in Nicaragua. A high pole was placed upright in the ground, to the top of which a rectangular frame was attached by ropes (fig. 8, *b*). The ropes were twisted around the pole, and then either two or four men clung to



FIG. 8.—*a*, The game of comelagatoazte. *b*, A dance at Tecoatega. (After Oviedo.)

ropes attached to the frame, which revolved rapidly and gradually lowered the men to the ground. The religious significance of this performance is discussed later (pages 75-76).

A second game was called *comelagatoazte* among the *Nicarao*. The paraphernalia consisted of two forked uprights, across the top of which a horizontal pole was lashed (fig. 8, *a*). A long beam, pierced in the center, revolved on the horizontal pole as an axle. Two men, each clinging to an end of the revolving beam, furnished the motive power by shifting their weights. This sport was developed locally, perhaps being an adaptation from the *voladores* game. It was known to both the *Nicarao* and the *Chorotega*.

## DANCES

*Nicarao* and *Chorotega*—Dancing is a pastime of which primitive peoples in all parts of the world are passionately fond, and to which religious significance is often attached. The tribes of Nicaragua were greatly addicted to the practice, not only as part of their religious festivals, but also for the mere pleasure of the performance, to which they habitually added the excessive use of intoxicating liquors.

The Nicaraguan dances fall into several classes. One of these is the religious dance, which will be described in connection with religious ceremonies; a second class consists of dramatic dances in which the text is as important as the actions, and the third is composed of communal dances with music and heavy drinking. Brinton (1883, pp. xix-xlviii), who has discussed this subject, especially in relation to the dramatic dances, much more thoroughly than is here possible, has classified the Nicaraguan dances thus:

1. Simple dances.
2. Dances with songs.
3. Dances with prose recitation.
4. Scenic recitations with music by a single actor.
5. Complete dramas, with music, ballets, dialogue, and costumes.

Type 5 is known today through the *Güegüence*, a drama distinguished by little plot but much coarse humor based largely on the play of words. Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XI) observes that at the time of his visit dances of a dramatic character were held which "take the place of history, as a method of recalling things of the past, and events are added to these as time goes on." Type 4 is the *loga*. It is well known through the *Loga del Niño Dios*, which consists of some two hundred lines of corrupt Spanish and Mangué, commencing with the words—

"Atienda, Señores,  
Pongan atención  
Del Mangué tiyo Pegro  
La conversación."

Dancing and singing of large groups (type 2 of Brinton's classification) was one of the greatest pleasures of the Nicaraguans. "They have other more common *areytos*," writes Oviedo (loc. cit.), "to celebrate their debauches of drunkenness, during which wine is as plentiful as are songs, and they end by becoming drunken wine-skins, and falling in a stupor upon the ground. Many of them who become thus intoxicated lie where they fall, till the effect of the wine wears

off, or till daybreak; because those of their companions who see them succumb feel it to be enviable, rather than disgraceful, and because they do not take part in order to dance, but rather that they may attain this condition."

Benzoni (p. 151) describes the dancing of Nicaragua as follows:

Two or three hundred, or even three or four thousand, assemble together, according to the population of the province, and having carefully swept the place where they are going to dance, one of them comes forward to lead the rest. He goes nearly always backward, turning himself occasionally, and so do all the others, by threes and fours in regular order. Those who beat the drum begin to sing some of their songs, and the man who leads the dance is the first to answer. Then the rest do the same progressively. Some carry a fan in the hand, some a calabash with pebbles in it; some wear feathers on the head, others wear rows of sea-shells on their arms and legs; some in one way, some in another, some raise their legs, others flourish their arms; some act the blind man, others pretend to be lame; some laugh, others cry; and thus with many other gestures, and frequent drinking of their *cacavote*, they dance all the day, and sometimes part of the night also. [See fig. 9.]

A more specific description of one of these dances is given by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XI):

One Saturday, on the twenty-ninth day of August, 1528, in the *plaza* of *Nicoya*, under the *cacique* of that province, Don Alonso, known by another name as *Nambi*, which in his *Chorotega* language means "dog," two hours before nightfall, about eighty or a hundred Indians began to sing and dance in an *areyto*, in one part of the

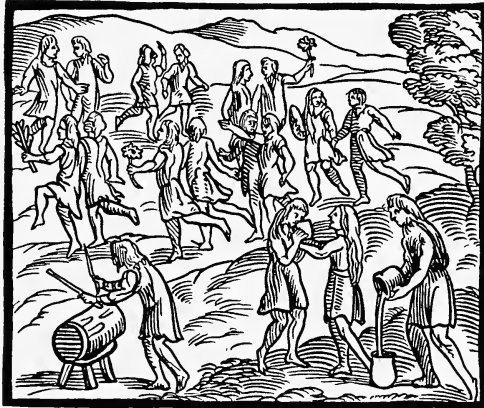


FIG. 9.—"A method of dancing in Nicaragua."  
(After Benzoni.)

*plaza*; they must have been of the vulgar and plebeian people, because in another part of the same *plaza*, the *cacique*, with much enjoyment and festivity, seated himself on a *duho*, or small bench, and his chief officials and about seventy or eighty other Indians on similar *duhos*. A girl began to bring them drink, in small gourds, like bowls or cups, of a *chicha*, of very strong and rather acid wine which they make of maize; and which, in its color, resembles chicken broth into which the yolks of one or two eggs have been broken. And as soon as they had begun to drink, the *cacique* himself brought forward a handful of rolls of tobacco, each as long as the distance from the end of one's thumb to

the tip of one's forefinger, and consisting of a certain leaf rolled up and tied with two or three thin cords of *agave* fiber; which leaf and the plant to which it pertains, they cultivate with great diligence, in order to obtain these tobaccos; and they lighted a small space at one end, and it consumes itself (like a *pibete*), until it is all burned away, which process lasts during a day; and from time to time they placed it in their mouths, at the end opposite to that which was burning, and they suck in its smoke for a short while, and then remove it, keeping their mouths closed, and holding the breath for a time, after which they breathe, and this smoke emerges through their mouths and noses. Each Indian, as I have said, held one of these rolled-up leaves, which they call among themselves *yapoquete*, but which, in this Island of *Hayti*, or *Hispaniola*, is called *tobaco*. The drinking continued, Indians of both sexes coming and going with that beverage, and bringing in turn gourds or large cups of the *cacao*, cooked as they are accustomed to drink it (but of this they took only three or four mouthfuls, and it went from hand to hand, now to one, now to another, and they took puffs of smoke at intervals, some of them thumping a drum, with their hands, and others singing). Thus occupied, they remained till after midnight, until most of them fell senseless on the ground, drunk; and as drunkenness has different effects upon different men, some would appear to sleep motionless, while others ran around weeping and howling, and stumbling foolishly. When they reached this state their wives and friends or children came and took them back to their houses to sleep, which they did till noon of the following day, or some even till the next night, and more, or less, according to the extent that they had drunk and participated in the orgy. He among this people who does not follow this custom of theirs, is regarded among them as of little account, and unfit to be a warrior.

While they wept and shrieked, it was a fearful thing to see their mad acts; and during the time that they were becoming further inebriated, it was more so; for the more the dubious ending of the affair was concealed from us, the more to be feared was the danger we thought ourselves to be in. The women behave in the same manner, but apart; but only those of highest rank.

This high development and ceremonial character of drunkenness is of South American origin, where similar festivals are found. In Mexico heavy drinking was severely punished, except in those of advanced years.

A peculiar practice, partaking of the nature of a game, a dance, and a warlike test of courage, is described by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XI) as follows:

Before the chief's *buhio* was a *barbacoa*, beneath which were about twenty Indians, painted in *bixa* and *xagua*, which are red and black, and wearing many and gorgeous feathers, who stood singing to the accompaniment of three or four kettle-drums; and in the *plaza*, about twenty paces in front of the shed where these musicians stood, were ten or twelve young warriors, masked and much painted, also in *bixa* and *xagua*, with their feathers and

stripes and fans and cotton lint, and other adjuncts, dancing a kind of *contrapas*. And ten paces beyond, to the right of them, were four others, well-built men, painted in many colors like the aforementioned, and with faces dyed red as blood, and the head ornaments and feathers and crests that they are accustomed to don that they may look fiercer in battle. Three of these four stood still and motionless, while the fourth danced and walked, in the manner of a *contrapas*, not going more than a pace or two to one side or the other from *Tecoatega*, the *cacique* of the district; who threw rods at the dancer, at three or four paces from him, often striking him on the sides, and flanks, and belly, and arms and legs, or wherever he aimed, but never on the head. And as the *cacique* launched the missiles, the dancer would evade them, twisting his body from side to side, or stopping, or turning his back, so that they often failed to strike him; but more often they hit smart blows, which raised large welts. And he would retire, and another of the four would take his place, undergoing some ten or twelve shots, or whatever number the *cacique* willed. And thus each of the four stood his turn until about thirty rods had been broken on them. These rods were lighter than canes, like reeds, and about as thick as the smallest finger of one's hand, and the thickest end being covered with a *çipote* or head of wax; so that though the blows were not dangerous, it was a brutal game, the men being naked. And he who received the stripes made no complaint, nor did he alter his expression, nor feel of the wound, nor lament any blow; but immediately prepared to receive another, with unchanging countenance and expression; and, also, the *cacique* threw the same rod three or four times until it broke, or else missed, and fell beyond its mark.

In this manner he expended some thirty of the aforesaid rods on the four Indians; and there was a large crowd of Indian men, large and small, and women, watching the said festival; and when the rod-throwing was over, the *cacique* sent for *cacao*, and with his own hand gave to each of the four up to five hundred grains and nuts of the said *cacao*. This done, they, with the dancers and musicians and singers, departed amid a great clamor, and, followed by a large crowd, went on to other *plazas*, and other *caciques* and lords, to repeat the performance and undergo a similar number of shots; this being undertaken by four more youths, of those who were sound and not battered; and for the purpose, they themselves took with them two Indians, each bearing armfuls of the rods.

After they had departed, I asked the *cacique* the reason for this ceremony, and whether its purpose was the celebration of one of their feast days, and what mysterious significance it had; and he replied that it was not a festival, but that these Indians were from other *plazas*, and were youths who went about for their own pleasure, as on a New-Year's expedition, to obtain gifts of *cacao* from the various lords and *caciques* who had it, and who gave it them, as he had done, but, before doing so, the custom was to break twenty or thirty rods upon them, as has been described, by which it appeared that they proved themselves to be youths of good courage, and strong and capable warriors, and able to endure wounds. And, verily, the said *cacique* cast the

rods with a good will, for he was young and strong; and gave good raps, that raised on them welts the size of one's finger or greater.

## EDUCATION

*Nicarao*—While details are lacking, it is evident that the *Nicarao* possessed a system of training young men and boys, although it is doubtful if this system was developed on a scale comparable with that employed by the Aztec. As in Mexico, the boys were assigned to a temple for a certain period by their parents. The young men were instructed in the art of war, and slept apart in specially appointed houses.

## MARRIAGE

*Nicarao*—"Their matrimonial customs are of many kinds," says Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. I), "and there is much to say with regard to them; and usually each man has only one wife, and those who have more are few, with the exception of the chiefs, or of those who are able to feed a greater number of women; and the *caciques* may have as many as they desire."

The chiefs of Tecoatega described their marriage ceremony to Francisco de Bobadilla in the following words (Oviedo, lib. XLII, cap. III) :

When we desire our sons to marry, the father of the youth goes to the father of the maiden and asks him if he wishes to give her to him as a daughter-in-law; and if he is content, large fowls are killed (which are like turkeys, and better than our turkeys in Spain, rather than inferior to them), *cacao* is brought (the nuts used for money), and several *xulos* (the species of cur which they breed and which has no bark), and which is good to eat; and other articles of food; there is a great festival of *areytos*, and the neighbors and friends being assembled, the marriage is celebrated as follows: The father or mother of the bride, or whoever gives her in marriage, is asked whether she comes a virgin; if the reply is affirmative, and the husband does not find her such, he gives her back; and he remains free, and she is known as a bad woman; but if she is not a virgin, and they are both satisfied, the marriage takes place, so long as warning to that effect is given before the union is consummated; for there are many who prefer the most corrupt women to the maidens.

The dowry consists of fruit-trees, such as *mameys*, and *nisperos*, and cacao-nuts, and plums of the kind from which wine is made, and land, and of the property her father has; and his father also gives of what he owns, on the marriage of his son; and if this man and wife die without children to inherit it, the property returns to the stock from which it came, but if there are children, they inherit it.

When they are to be united, the *cacique*, with his right hand, takes the bride and groom by the little fingers or auriculars of their left hands, and puts over both these fingers a small sheath, which they have for the purpose, saying to them: "Look to it that you are faithful one to the other, and that you take such care of your property that you may constantly increase and never waste it." They are then left alone, beside a small fire of chips of perfumed wood, which is sufficient to give them light, and they remain silent, watching it burn; and as soon as it is consumed they are married and the rest follows. And on the following day, their relatives and those who go there, feast with much rejoicing and pleasure, and bear them gifts of what they have; but before this feast, the husband must state whether he found the bride to be a virgin; and if such is the case, all her relatives and friends gather round, with great acclamation, in token of victory; if he did not find her such, he departs in great anger, sending her home to her parents, and searches for another bride.

This form of marriage was apparently the normal one, and it is not essentially dissimilar from that in use among the Aztec. However, Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII) has described a second form of marriage, which, although he fails to state what people practised it and leaves the inference that it was the Nicarao, I am inclined to attribute to the Chorotega, from whom the Nicarao perhaps adopted it.

It would happen that when a father or a mother had one or two or more daughters—these, so long as they did not marry by will of their parents (or their own) with whoever pleased them, by means of covenant and contract, do not refrain from gratifying their bodies; and they yield themselves to whomsoever they wish, for a price or without one, and she who is the most dishonest and shameless and has the greatest number of gallants or lovers, and knows best how to fleece them, is the cleverest, and the best beloved of her parents. And by this vile trade she earns her dowry, with which she marries, and even maintains her father's house; and, to break away from this vice or take a husband, she asks of her father a piece of land near where he lives, and it is marked out for her, as large as she wishes it. Then she arranges to build the house at the expense of the dolts, and she says to her pimps or lovers (all being gathered together) that she wishes to marry, and to take one of them as her husband, and that she has no house, and desires them to build it for her in the place designated; and she gives them the plan of the way it must be done, and says that if they love her well, it must be finished upon such a date, which is thirty or forty days from that time. And one she commissions to bring the wood for the framework, and another to bring the cane for the walls, and another the hemp and part of the lattice, and another the straw to cover it, and another to bring fish, and another deer and pigs and other things, and another maize in abundance for the feast, according to her and their standing. And this is immediately put into effect and fulfilled, so that not the smallest part of it is lacking; rather, they bring double, for they are aided by their relatives and friends, and it is

considered a great honor to live with a wife obtained in this manner, and to be chosen, and the other competitors rejected.

Upon the day of the marriage, or the lewd decision, rather than marriage, her gallants and she, and the friends and relatives of one and the others, sup together in the new house, in which she and one of the lovers are to remain wedded; and after they have supped, which is at dusk (for the feast is begun by daylight), she rises, saying that it is time for her to retire to sleep, with her husband, and in a few words she thanks her servitors for all they have done in her service, and tells them she would that she could make herself several women, so that she might give his share to each, and that, in the past, they have seen the good-will with which she has satisfied each of them, and that henceforth she must belong to one man only, and she wishes him to be such a one; and so saying, she takes him by the hand, and goes with him to where they are to sleep. Then those who are discarded depart with their companions, and the kinsmen and friends of the newly-married pair start an *areyto*, and dance and drink till they fall backward, and thus ends the feast; and she is a virtuous woman from that time on, and has no more to do with any whom she has known, nor any other man, and she looks after her household.

Of those who were disappointed, some or most of them take it with patience, and also it sometimes happens that morning finds one or several of them hanged to a tree, in order that the Devil may have still more of a share in the marriage. But it is to be noted that although the souls of those so hanged may perish, their bodies are not allowed to be lost, but the wedding-feast and invitations are renewed with their flesh, because the victim usually despairs and hangs himself close by with a hempen rope. See what their *teotes* or gods teach them, since they come to such a pass and end so badly.

As stated above, the nobles were allowed several women. Only one of these was regarded as a legitimate wife, however—the others were slaves. A man committing bigamy was deprived of his property and forced into exile by his relatives. Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. III) says:

The same penalty is laid upon a woman who unites herself with a man whom she knows to be married; her property is likewise taken from her, and she is banished. And the property thus taken away is given to the first wife, who thus remains husbandless, and she may marry again, since her husband has taken another wife during her lifetime, and the first husband has been banished from the land; but if this first wife has had children by the husband thus exiled, she may not marry again.

The adulteress was beaten by her husband and then sent home to her father with all her property. She was not allowed to remarry, but her husband might do so. The children remained in the custody of the father, unless he willed otherwise. The husband felt no shame or responsibility, but the relatives of the wife felt themselves dis-

graced. The adulterer was beaten by the affronted husband, but suffered no further penalty.

Marriage was prohibited to relations of the first degree only, and indeed was encouraged among relatives, for it was felt that family ties were strengthened by such procedure. Incest was not known.

In cases of rape, the violator was bound and taken to the house of the girl's parents, where he was kept for five or six days. During this time the man must ransom himself to the satisfaction of the parents, or of the girl if she had no parents. If unable to do so, he remained a slave.

If a slave was discovered sleeping with the daughter of his master, they both were buried alive immediately.

The position of the wife after marriage was unusually good. Andagoya (p. 33) writes:

The husbands were so much under subjection that if they made their wives angry, they were turned out of doors, and their wives even raised their hands against them. The husband would go to his neighbors and beg them to ask his wife to let him come back, and not be angry with him. The wives made their husbands attend to them and do everything like servant lads.

This relationship between husband and wife suggests South American affiliations, as among the Chibcha of Colombia a wife was permitted to flog her husband (Joyce, 1912, p. 33). Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. 1), speaking, as usual, with greater precision than other observers, remarks:

It is the duty of the men to provide their own houses with labor in the fields, and agriculture and hunting and fishing; and the women attend to the barter, and goods, but before the husband sets out from the house he must leave it swept and the fire lit; and then he takes his weapons and goes to the fields or to his work, or to fish or hunt, or to perform whatever duties he knows or is accustomed to practise.

*Chorotega*—Monogyny was prevalent among the common people, while the upper classes had as many women as they wished. The ceremony of marriage among the Chorotega has not been described, but the writer believes that the second type in use among the Nicaraos was taken over by them from the Chorotega. Among the Orotinians the cacique possessed the *jus primæ noctis*, and the parents of the girl considered it an honor when this custom was observed.

*Guatar*—The chiefs, as elsewhere in this region, had many women, while the lower classes were permitted only one.

## PROSTITUTION

*Nicarao and Chorotega*—As in Mexico, prostitution was a recognized institution in Nicaragua. Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. I) states:

There are public women, who earn by yielding themselves to whoever desires them, for ten of the cacao-nuts, which they use, as has been said, for money; and some of them have followers, who are given none of their earnings, but who serve them, and live with them, and take care of the house, while they go to the markets, to sell themselves, or do whatever may please them.

In this connection mention must be made of a period of license, probably of religious significance, which Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII) describes in the following words:

During a certain famous feast, when many people assemble, it is the custom for the women to be free, for the duration of the feast (which takes place at night), to have intercourse with whoever pays for them or pleases them, however high in rank they or their husbands may be. And that night being past, there is thenceforward no suspicion or hint of such a thing, nor is it done more than once a year, at least with the consent and license of the husbands; nor is it followed by punishment or jealousy, or other penalty. . . .

## LAWS

*Nicarao and Chorotega*—Under such subjects as marriage, trade, and rank, are discussed many of the regulations which governed the conduct of the peoples of Nicaragua. In addition, a few more of their laws are known:

1. In regard to murder, Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. III) states:

If one man slay another, the deed cannot be undone, and no penalty is exacted from the one who does it; but if the victim is a freeman, his slayer gives his kindred and wife a slave of either sex, or clothing, or whatever he has, and suffers no other punishment.

2. The thief caught in the act was taken to the house of the owner of the goods, where he was kept until he gave satisfaction, failing which he became the slave of the owner of the goods. If he redeemed himself, his hair was cut off.

3. With respect to debts, Oviedo (loc. cit.) writes:

One who borrows may repay or not; but if his debt is in maize or anything easily taken and carried, the lender may go to his field and repay himself without risk of punishment.

4. A man might depart from the region in which he lived without hindrance, but he could not sell his property, which he must leave to his kindred.

In general, it appears that the legal system of the Nicaraos and Chorotegas was on a different basis from that of the Aztecs, for among the latter there existed a complicated system of tribunals, each with its particular composition and jurisdiction, and the right of appeal to a higher court was acknowledged. In Nicaragua, however, while the laws themselves are not un-Mexican in character, the execution of justice was in that stage of development which entrusted the punishment of the criminal to the individual wronged rather than to special officers of justice. We have no knowledge how the peoples of Nicaragua made decisions as to the facts of a crime, but it is doubtful if any complicated legal procedure existed, otherwise the necessary institutions would scarcely have escaped the notice of Oviedo.

## CHAPTER IV

### RELIGION

IN estimating the character of the religious beliefs and practices of this region, it will be well to see what features are common to Mexico and South America. In the first place, in regard to human sacrifice, both the Chibcha and the Nahua practised two forms, in one of which the heart was extracted, while in the other the victim was killed with spears or arrows, the blood being allowed to flow upon the ground. In Peru the usual form of sacrifice was by extracting the heart of the victim. Zárate describes a rite during which a figure of a man was placed on tall poles and shot at with arrows, after which a victim was sacrificed on the ground below. This rite is evidently derived from the one we have described. It is illustrated in the French edition of 1742. Among both the Aztec and the Chibcha it was customary to prepare selected captives for sacrifice, during which period they were regarded as divine, while in each case the sacrifice of children to insure rainfall was considered proper. Indeed, it seems that all the fundamentals of the much better known Aztec sacrificial complex were practised by the Chibcha and other Colombian tribes, and, in a modified form, extended as far south as Peru. This is of special interest when we remember that human sacrifice traditionally was not introduced among the Nahua until the middle of the eleventh century. It is therefore quite probable that the idea is essentially a South American one, taken over and developed by the Nahua, especially the Aztec.

A further point of interest is that the Chibcha believed that the soul of the warrior slain in battle and of the woman who died in childbirth were particularly fortunate in another world. This conception was found in Mexico as well, where death by sacrifice was also considered a warrior's end. Among other details in common between Mexico and Colombia we can mention a snake cult, and stone worship, the cremation of the dead, placing heads of enemies in front of the temples, a priestly class who had to undergo years of training, etc. By adducing such parallels it is not intended necessarily to suggest origins. However, there is a constant tendency to associate everything possible with the Aztec, because they are better known than

other American tribes, a usage often scarcely justified, for the Aztec appear to have been borrowers, rather than creators, of culture.

Turning now to the pantheons in Nicaragua, we find that of the Nacarao shows affiliations with Mexico, while the others are isolated and are certainly not of Mexican origin. We must note that the great gods of the Aztec are not present in Nicaragua, although the name *Ochilobos*, a Spanish corruption of *Huitzilopochtli*, is applied to the sanctuaries. On the other hand several of the lesser Aztec gods are found, which serves to emphasize the fact that the Aztec borrowed many of the gods of their neighbors. The pantheon of the Nacarao can well be regarded as a specialized series of Nahuatl gods such as each tribe once possessed, and from the conjunction of many of which arose the difficult complexities of Aztec religion.

A word should be said about our sources of information. As usual, the bulk of the material comes from Oviedo, who not only witnessed several ceremonies himself, but also incorporated in his work the records of Fray Francisco de Bobadilla, who made an inquiry into the religion of the Nacarao. Owing to the fact that most of the material deals with the Nacarao, it has seemed best to abandon the former method of presentation, and, instead of a comparative exposition of the various aspects of the religious activities and beliefs of each tribe, to treat the religion of each people as a whole.

## I. NICARAO RELIGION

### PANTHEON

The following names of the gods of the Nacarao are given in the records of Francisco de Bobadilla, quoted by Oviedo:

#### *Tamagastat*

The world was created by Tamagastat (Tamagostat) and his wife Cipattonal (Cipatoval), assisted by Oxomogo, Calchitguegue, and Chicociagat. Not only was the world created by this divine pair, but they were also responsible for the recreation after the flood, "and all the race of men and women descended from them." In former times Tamagastat and Cipattonal had dwelt upon the earth, in the likeness of Indians, where they were said to have disseminated the culture enjoyed by mankind. Later they ascended to heaven (which was the place where the sun rises), and there they ruled over a paradise, and

were waited upon by the souls of those who had fallen in battle. Thus this celestial pair enjoyed three attributes: they were creator deities, culture heroes, and the ruling gods of heaven.

Seler (1902b, II, p. 1030) says the Nicaraguan pair were considered "as the sky gods and as the pair of primal gods, and thus in nature corresponded with *Xochiquetzal*, *Tonacaciuatl*, and *Omeciuatl*" of the Aztec. Yet this statement is not fully true, for it appears that the Nicaraguan gods entered into the daily life of the people. Creator deities, in a primitive religion, are usually distinct from those gods who interest themselves in the affairs of men, and such was the case among the Aztec. In Nicaragua, however, the reverse was true, and human sacrifice was performed in honor of Tamagastat and Cipattonal.

Among the names of the gods of the Mexicans, there is none which resembles *Tamagastat*, yet it has many affiliations among Aztec religious terms. Thus the trumpeters of the temples were called *tlamacazque*; various ranks of the priesthood were named *tlamacaston*, *tlamacazqui* (the ordinary term for "priest"), and *tlamamacac*; the two supreme heads of the religious orders were *totec tlamacazqui* and *Tlaloc tlamacazqui*. The word *tlama* means "doctor," and *tlamacazqui* may quite accurately be translated "shaman".

Müller (1867, pp. 435, 503) has identified Tamagastat with Tamagata, the ancient sun god of the Muysca, who, says Bancroft (1875, vol. III, p. 491), "after his dethronement by a newer solar deity became more the fire god of that particular people, but retained more of his original preëminence in the countries to which his worship had spread, as in Nicaragua. This view is supported by the statement that he inhabited the heavens, or rather the region of the sunrise."

#### *Cipattonal*

The place of this goddess, the consort of Tamagastat in the Nicaraguan pantheon, we have already discussed; we must glance at her position in Mexico. Among the Aztec, Cipactonal, male, is associated with Oxomogo, female, and they are both vaguely connected with the creator deities. The change of sex is probably not of great importance, and one writer, Mendieta, says the Mexican Cipactonal was female. Similar changes of sex are not unknown in other parts of the world; the Buddhist divinity Kwannon is a well-known example.

Sahagún says that the Toltec, in the course of their migration, came to Tamoanchan, where the wise men who had guided them departed, sailing over the sea to the east. Those who remained behind were ruled by lesser leaders among whom were Oxomogo and Cipactonal.

"The primal gods created a man and a woman," writes Mendieta (pp. 229-230); "they called the man Uxumuco and the woman Cipactonal, and they commanded them to cultivate the land, and she should spin and weave, and of them should be born the common people, and they should not hold holiday, but labor continuously, and the gods gave her some kernels of maize with which she might effect cures and carry on fortune-telling and divination, and the women are accustomed to do this to the present day."

It is in their position as the creators of the calendar, both the fifty-two-year period and the *tonalamatl*, however, that Oxomogo and Cipactonal figure most prominently in Mexico, and they were also acknowledged the originators of soothsaying and divination. In these functions they are associated with Quetzalcoatl, to whom alone the creation of these arts is sometimes assigned.

A close parallel to both the Aztec and the Nicaraguan pair may be found in the Quiche *Xpiyacoc* and *Xmucane*, who are invoked in the Popol Vuh, says Brinton (1881, p. 14), "to favor the germination of seeds, and the creation of mankind; they are addressed as 'ancestress of the sun, ancestress of light.' The old man, *Xpiyacoc*, is spoken of as the master of divination by the *tzite*, or sacred beans; the old woman, *Xmucane*, as she who could forecast days and seasons; they were the parents of those mighty ones 'whose name was *Ahpu*,' masters of magic. From this ancient couple, Ximénez tells us that the magicians and medicine-men of his day claimed to draw their inspiration." Brinton has derived these names from the Quiche tongue, but Brasseur de Bourbourg believed that they were corrupted Mexican names, in which Seler (1899, p. 31) is inclined to agree.

The name *Cipactonal* is derived from the Aztec *cipactli*, the earth monster, and *tonalli*, "warmth," "intensity," or "spirit".

### *Oxomogo*

The relation of Oxomogo to the Mexican Cipactonal has been discussed; of his position in the Nicaraguan pantheon we know nothing, except that he took part in the creation. Seler (1899, p. 31) states

that he has been unable to analyze the word *Oxomogo*, but suggests a possible derivation from the Tzental *hun moxic*.

The name Oxomogo is preserved today in the Rio Ochomago of Nicaragua and the Laguna de Ochomago of the Highlands of Costa Rica.

#### *Calchitgueque*

This deity also was associated with the creation. The name is probably the combination of the Aztec *chalchiuitl*, "jade," and *gueque*, "very old". It is possible that the Nicaraguan deity may be connected with the Aztec *Chalchiuhtlatonac*, one of the gods associated with pregnancy and birth. However, stone worship was by no means unknown in the Americas, and in Mexico *chalchiuitl*, or jade, was offered to the rain god Tlaloc.

#### *Chicociagat*

This deity was also associated with the creation. The name is perhaps derived from *chico a ce acatl*, "Six Reed," a date doubtless connected with a god whose name has not been preserved. In the Aztec symbolism this day is associated with the west. An alternative derivation is from *chico*, "five," and *ciacatl*, "arm-pit," "breast," "bosom," "heart," etc.

#### *Quiateot*

This was the god of rain, thunder, and lightning, whose name is derived from the Aztec *quiauitl*, "rain," and *teotl*, "god," and who may have been connected with Quiauhteucyohua, one of the nine lords of the night associated with rain and the Aztec rain god Tlaloc.

"To ask for water," the natives told Francisco de Bobadilla (Oviedo, lib. XLII, cap. II), "we go to a temple which we have erected to him, and there we kill and sacrifice youths and maidens; and having cut off their heads, we sprinkle the blood over the idols and images of stone which we keep in the house of prayer of these gods; which in our tongue is called *teoba*."

#### *Omeyateitc and Omeyatecigoat*

This pair were the father and mother of Quiateot. Joyce (1916, p. 19) has identified them with the Toltec deities Ometecutli and Omeciuatl, the "Twofold Lord" and the "Twofold Lady" who dwelt

at the culmination of the universe in Omeyocan, whence they ruled the twelve heavens and the earth, having special care of the procreation of life. On philological grounds this identification is unsatisfactory, and connection is suggested with Yoaltecutli and Yoaltiatl, the "Lord of the Night," god of the sleep of infants, and "Enchantress of the Night," goddess of children. *Omeyateite* contains two elements of known value in Nicarao: *ome* means "two," and *teite* (Aztec *tecutli*) "lord". *Ya* not improbably is a contraction of *yoalli*, "night". *Omeyatecigoat* also contains known values in *ome*, "two," and *goat* (Aztec *coatl* or *ciuatl*), "woman" or "female". *Ya* again may be from *yoalli*, "night". The syllable *tiatl* in the name *Yoaltiatl* is derived usually from the Aztec *ticitl*, "enchantress," and *tecia* may have a similar origin. The function of the syllable *ome* ("two") in names is not clear, but it serves probably as an honorific, hence its addition to a name is not unreasonable.

#### *Chiquinaut and Hecat*

These deities were the Nicaraguan gods of the winds. Joyce (1916, p. 19) has connected the names with *chiquinaui Eecatl* (Nine Wind), "a date sacred to the Mexican wind god, which might well therefore be employed as his calendrical name."

#### *Mixcoa*

In Nicaragua the name *Mixcoa* was assigned to the god of trade, to gain whose favor men drew blood from their tongues before setting out to buy or sell. In Mexico, *Mixcoatl* (fig. 42) was primarily the tribal hunting god of the Chichimec, just as *Taras* was the tribal god of the Tarascans, *Camaxtli* of the Tlaxcalans, and *Huitzilopochtli* of the Aztec. "I will twirl fire on the mountains of *Mixcouatl*, in Colhuacan," says an old Mexican hymn. *Mixcoatl* was adopted by the Aztec, and festivals were held in his honor during the month *Quecholli*. Prisoners of war who engaged in gladiatorial combat were sometimes clad in his insignia. In various Mexican codices *Mixcoatl* is depicted in association with the Morning Star and with the north.

*Iztac Mixcoatl*, "the White Cloud-snake," also known as the Old God or Ruler of the Stars, is said to have lived in primordial times in the Land of the Seven Caves. By his first wife, *Ilancueye*, according to *Motolinía*, he begat the progenitors of the various Mexican

tribes and of the Nicarao; by his second wife, Chinamatl, he became the father of the culture-bearer, Quetzalcoatl.

This god appears to have been one of the oldest Mexican deities, and his presence in Nicaragua with different attributes tends to confirm the hypothesis. His representation appears on the frescoes at Mitla, and possibly also on the frescoes of Santa Rita, British Honduras.

The name *Mixcoatl* comes from the Aztec *mixtli*, "cloud," and *coatl*, "serpent".

#### *Bisteot*

The god of hunger. The first syllable is probably a corruption of *uitz*, or *uiz*, and the name may be derived from the Aztec *teocihuiztli*, "hunger" and *teotl*, "god". The syllable *uitz* is one that enters largely into Aztec nomenclature. The best known example is Uitzilopochtli (Huitzilopochtli), the Aztec War God. Uitzauatl was the god of the slaves destined for sacrifice, and there were certain goddesses known as Uitznaua, who were associated with *uitzlan*, the south.

No major ceremonies in connection with Bisteot have been recorded, and it is doubtful if this deity occupied an important place in the Nicarao pantheon. However, it was customary to invoke the aid of Bisteot on journeys by throwing grass on certain piles of stones by the roadside.

#### *Maçat and Toste*

These gods were invoked for success in hunting deer and rabbits; when the animal was captured, the head was cut off and the blood dried and wrapped in a bundle, and both were hung in the door of the house. The word *maçat* is a corruption of the Aztec *mazatl*, "deer," and *toste* of *tochtli*, "rabbit".

#### *Miqtanteot*

Among the Aztec, Mictlantecutli was the lord of Mictlan or the lower world, and among the Nicarao Miqtanteot held a similar position.

#### *Cacaguat*

There is no information concerning the god of *Cacao* except the ceremony described on page 75.

## PRIESTS

Direct information concerning the priesthood is meager. It seems that, as in Mexico, the priests formed a caste apart from the rest of the community, and that their influence in temporal affairs, though perhaps great, was indirect, for there is no mention of the priests holding office in the government. Learning and the preserving of tradition were confined to the priests and the nobles as in Mexico, so that we may assume that the one was recruited from the ranks of the other.

## TEMPLES

The temples, which were called *ochilobos* (see page 65), or *teoba*, were low and dark buildings of timber and thatch, with many inner chapels in which the nobles kept their household gods. In front of the temple was a court in which stood the mound used for human sacrifice. Within the temple were idols, made usually of stone, but in some cases fashioned of hammered gold; and also there were suitable quarters for the priests and their numerous attendants.

The temples owned no property and had no regular income, but were supported by gifts. Young boys, as we have seen, were assigned to the various temples by their parents for educational purposes, and in return they acted as servants to the priests, performing all the menial duties of the establishment, such as sweeping, collecting firewood, etc. Food was supplied by the various offerings made to the gods, and the parents whose child was in the temple service probably made special contributions of edibles. Women were not allowed to have anything to do with the temples, nor were they ever admitted to them except to be sacrificed. Furthermore, no man might have intercourse with a woman during the principal festivals, lest the gods visit him with sickness and death, and at the time of the great feasts the men slept outside the houses.

## OFFERINGS

Human sacrifice was the most spectacular ceremony of the Nicarao, and we are comparatively well informed concerning it. Peter Martyr (p. 241) writes: "Within the views of their Temples there are divers *Bases* or *Pillars* like Pulpittes erected in the fields, of unburned brick, and a certayne kind of clammie earthy *Bitumen* which serveth for divers uses and effectes." These mounds were ascended by eight,

twelve, or fifteen steps, and on the summit, which was large enough to hold ten men, was placed a block of stone the size of a man which was used for the sacrifice. On this stone the victim was extended in the sight of the assembled caciques and common people. The priest passed thrice about the summit singing "certain mournful songs," and then, with a stone knife, cut open the victim through the "short ribbes," and extracted the still palpitating heart. The priest then anointed with blood his own face and that of the idol in the temple, while the people prayed for such blessings as fertility of the soil, plenty of fruits, salubrity of the air, peace, victory, absence of flies and locusts, protection against flood, drought, wild animals, etc.

Peter Martyr recognizes two classes of victims,—slaves and captives,—and the method of procedure differed according to the type which was sacrificed. Slaves were sometimes specially raised for sacrifice; they were regarded as semi-divine before the ceremony took place, and were allowed to walk freely through the town, helping themselves to whatever—food or ornament—took their fancy. After the death of the slave, the body was butchered, and the hands, feet, and entrails were buried in the court before the temple doors, while the other remains, including the heart, were burned in a nearby field and the ashes scattered, amid the "shrill hymns and applauses of the Priests." This type of sacrifice is directly parallel to the often-described Aztec sacrifice to Tezcatlipoca and also to a similar ceremony held in honor of Huitzilopochtli, both of which took place in the month Toxcatl. A similar sacrificial rite was practised in Colombia.

After the death of the prisoner of war, the body was cut up and distributed to be eaten, the hands and feet to the king, the heart to the priests, their wives and children, the thighs to the nobles, and the rest to the common people. The head was hung on a tree, and each hostile country was assigned a special tree for the heads of its captives.

Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. III) says that the sacrificial mounds were called *tescuit* and the officiating priest *tamagast* (Aztec *tlamacazqui*, "priest"). At the moment of sacrifice the officiating priest cried aloud to the stone images in the temple, "Take, receive this which the caciques offer you!" After the sacrifice the head was severed and placed on a pole in front of the temple; the body was eaten by the

caciques and priests, and the entrails by the cacique's *escoletes*, or trumpeters.

Women, as we have seen, were not allowed in the temples, and only in the case of the lesser temples was it permissible to sacrifice them within the temple grounds. For the more important religious structures women were sacrificed "outside the courtyard," and the blood was carried into the building and sprinkled on the face of the idol. Their bodies were eaten by the caciques but not by the priests, so that their flesh might never be admitted to the sacred precincts.

According to tradition, the first human sacrifice in Mexico was the offering of children to Tlaloc in the year 1018, and in Nicaragua youths and maidens were also offered to the rain god. The bodies of these youthful victims were not eaten, however, but were interred. The sacrifice of children to obtain rain was also considered appropriate in Colombia.

In general, we may say that human sacrifice in Nicaragua was closely parallel to that of Mexico, and the probability is that further knowledge would serve more fully to confirm this statement. However, the Mexican arrow sacrifice is not mentioned by any writer as occurring in Nicaragua. Traditionally this was the first form employed in Mexico, and it was also practised in Colombia. In Nicaragua, however, as in Mexico, death in battle insured entrance of the soul into the domain of the gods. Furthermore, in both countries death by sacrifice was considered a warrior's death, and hence to be desired. This point is of interest because it explains in a measure the lack of repugnance to human sacrifice in Middle America, and cases are on record of a captive refusing his liberty and insisting that he be sacrificed that his future happiness might be insured. Parallel also to Mexico was the Nicaraguan rite of offering blood drawn from the tongue, ears, or penis. As in Mexico, this offering was considered an everyday affair, and Peter Martyr (p. 242) tells us that the natives possessed a powder which healed in a few hours the wounds thus caused. Offerings of fish, fowl, maize, game, fruits, etc., were made for the use of the priests and their attendants, and also certain perfumed woods and resin to be used as incense.

#### CALENDRIAL FEASTS

The chiefs of the Nicaraos told Fray Francisco de Bobadilla (Oviedo, lib. XLII, cap. III) that their principal feasts were twenty-one in

number and the names which they gave him, as will be seen from the following list, correspond to the Aztec day-names.

	NICARAGUAN	MEXICAN	ENGLISH
1	Agat	Acatl	Reed
2	Ocelot	Ocelotl	Ocelot
3	Oate	Quauhtli	Eagle
4	Coscagoate	Cozcaquauhtli	Vulture
5	Olin	Ollin	Motion
6	Tapecat	Tecpatl	Flint
7	Quiaüit	Quiahiutl	Rain
8	Sochit	Xochitl	Flower
9	Çipat	Cipactli	Alligator
10	Acat	Ehecatl	Wind
11	Cali	Calli	House
12	Quespal	Cuetzpalin	Lizard
13	Coat	Coatl	Snake
14	Misiste	Miquiztli	Death
15	Maçat	Mazatl	Deer
16	Toste	Tochtli	Rabbit
17	At	Atl	Water
18	Izquindi	Itzcuintli	Dog
19	Ocomate	Ozomatli	Monkey
20	Malinal	Malinalli	Grass
21	Acato		

The number twenty-one is explained by the repetition of the first day *agat* in the slightly modified form *acato*. From Oviedo we also learn that the year consisted of ten *centpuales* (Aztec *centpohualli*, "twenties") of twenty days each. As this conforms with no known Middle American calendar, it is probable that the text is corrupt or that the original record is erroneous. Seler (1902) suggests that thirteen be substituted for ten, thus conforming with the sacred year, or *tonalamatl*, of the Aztec. In the opinion of the writer, eighteen is a better choice, for it is more probable that in the Spanish text *diez* was mistakenly written for *diez y ocho* than for *trece*, and this opinion is strengthened by the statement of Gomara (p. 284) that they had eighteen months.

The Aztec year consisted of eighteen months of twenty days each, plus five days. As there were twenty day-names, each succeeding year began with a day five days farther along the list than the preceding year. As twenty is four times divisible by five, it follows that only four days could begin the year. With the names of the days

were associated the numbers one to thirteen in succession. Thus the day *acatl* could be distinguished by thirteen different numbers attached to it. The years were named from their first day: one *tochtli*, two *acatl*, three *tecpatl*, four *calli*, five *tochtli*, six *acatl*, etc.

The use of a similar system in Nicaragua is suggested by the fact that the list of days begins with *agat* (*acatl*), which is one of the four days which can begin the year among the Aztec. Correlation of the Aztec and Christian chronology is established through numerous dates written in both systems. As this list of Nicaraguan day-names was collected in September, 1528, which was the Aztec year ten *tecpatl*, it appears at first glance that the two calendars were not in harmony. However, the Aztec year nine *acatl* (according to Sahagún, p. 51) ended in February, 1528. It is quite possible that the native chiefs gave Francisco de Bobadilla the native year corresponding with January 1, 1528, instead of the year at the time of questioning, September, 1528. If this surmise is accepted, the calendars of the Aztec and the Nicaraguans were in agreement.

#### MAJOR CEREMONIES

The festival held in Tecoatega at the end of the harvest of cacao in honor of the god *Cacaguat* has been described in detail by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XI). We shall let him picture it in his own words:

About sixty persons, all men, some of whom were disguised as women, danced a *contrapas*; they were all painted, and wore much and gorgeous plumage, and sandals, and motley doublets of variegated patterns and colors; and they were naked, for the sandals and doublets of which I speak were painted; but in a manner so true to life that anyone would have taken them to be as fully attired as any pagan German or Teutonic soldier. And this paint was of cotton lint (first spun), resembling the waste left by the scissors of the shearers, and was dyed as many colors as could be found, all very brilliant. Some wore masks like the faces of birds, and they danced around the *plaza*, two by two, each three or four paces apart; and in the middle of the *plaza*, was erected a tall stake more than eighty palms high, on the upper end of which was seated a brightly painted idol, which they call the god of the *cacaguat*, or cacao; and there were four poles suspended so as to form a frame around the upper part of the stake, and a rope of hemp (or of *agave*) as thick as one's two fingers was wound round the latter. To its ends were attached two boys of seven or eight years of age, one of whom held a bow in one hand and in the other a bundle of arrows, while the second carried a brilliant fan of feathers and a mirror. At a certain time during the dance, these boys would let themselves drop from the frame, and hang in the air, revolving around the pole as the rope unwound, flying farther out at every

revolution, and counterbalancing each other [fig. 8, *b*]; and during the descent of these boys, the sixty continued their measure in a very orderly manner, to the music furnished by those who were singing and beating upon certain tambours and kettledrums; for there were ten or twelve persons engaged in singing and playing, very poorly, and the dancers did not converse, but were very silent.

This festival of singing and thumping and dancing lasted more than half an hour, as has been said; and at the end of this time, the boys began to descend, and were as long in reaching the ground as one would take to repeat the Credo five or six times. As the rope unwound, the boys moved through the air with considerable swiftness, moving their arms and legs so that they appeared to be flying; and as the rope is of a certain length they suddenly come to a stop at a palm's breadth above the ground, when it is all unwound. When they find themselves approaching the ground, they contract their limbs, and extend them at the same moment, so that they remain standing about thirty paces from the pole which stands upright, one on one side and one on the other; and on the instant, the dance and the singers and musicians cease with a loud shout and with this the festival is over.

The pole is left standing for eight or ten days, at the end of which one hundred or more Indians assemble and remove it, taking down the *cemi*, or idol, from the top and bearing it to its place of worship and the temple of its sacrifices, where it remains till the same feast comes round again in the following year. The sight is undoubtedly a pleasing one; but what pleased me most was the style of adornment or dress above described, and the many and wonderful feather crests they wore, and the manner in which they were divided into groups of two or four, each of these groups being painted in a special manner, all well-matched and fine-looking men; and I maintain that they would make a brave appearance in Spain and France and Italy and Germany, or indeed in any part of the world.

Brinton (1883, p. xxii) writes:

To one familiar with Nahuatl symbolism, the meaning of this ceremony is, in a general way, obvious. The seated divinity on the summit of the pole represents the god of fertility throned in the heavens. The two boys are the messengers he sends to the earth; the arrows refer to the lightning which he hurls below; the feather fan typifies the breezes and the birds; the mirror, the waters and rains. After the mortals have prayed in chant for a certain season, the god sends his messengers; men wait in suspense their arrival, whether it shall be for good or ill hap; and as they reach the earth, a shout of joy is raised, for food has ripened and been gathered in, and the harvest-home is ended.

Offerings of blood have already been mentioned, and Peter Martyr (p. 242) has described a ceremony at which such offerings were made:

The Kings, Priests and Nobles sacrifice to one Idoll onely with their owne bloud. This idol fastened to the toppe of a speare of three cubites long,

the elder sorte, authorized thereunto, with great pompe in the face of heaven (carry it) out of the Temple. where it is religiously kept all the yeere: & it is like the infernall goddes, after the same manner that is paynted upon the walles to terrifie men. The myrtred Priestes goe before, & a multitude of people following after carry every one their banners of woven cotton, painted with a thousand colours, with the images & representation of their divels. From the Priestes shoulders, covered with divers linnen clothes, certaine belts, more than a finger thicke, hang down unto the ancles, at the fringed endes whereof several purses are annexed, wherein they carry sharpe rasors of stone, and little bagges of powders made of certayne dried hearbes. The King & his Nobles follow the Priestes behinde in their order, & after them the confused multitude of the people to a man; none that can stand on his feete may bee absent from these ceremonies. Being come unto the appoynted place, first strawing sweete smelling hearbes, or spreading sheets or coverlettes of divers colours under them, that the speare may not touch the ground, they make a stand, & the priests supporting the same, they salute their little divel with their accustomed songs & hymmes: the young men leape about it, tripping and dancing with a thousande kinds of antique sports, vaunting their agility & nimbleness of body by the shaking of their weapons & targets. The priestes making a sign unto them, every one taketh his rasor, and turning their eyes unto the Idoll, they gash and wound their owne tongues, some thrust them through & the most part cut them so that the blood issueth forth in great abundance, all of them (as we sayd in the former sacrifices) rubbe the lippes & beard of that foolish idol; then presently applying the powder of that hearbe, they fill their woundes. They say that the vertue of that powder is such that within a fewe houres their ulcers are cured, so that they seeme never to have beene cutte. These ceremonies ended, the Priestes bowe down the speare a litle, at what tyme, the King first then the Nobles, and lastly the people whisper the Idoll in the eare, & every one uttereth the turbulent and tempestuous outrage of his minde, and bending the head to one shoulder, with reverent trembling, and mumbling they humbly beseech that luckily, and happily he would favor their desires. Being thus deluded by the Priestes, they retorne home again.

Aside from the picturesque language of "M. Lok, Gent.", the translator, this passage is of interest because it describes a festival to the head of the pantheon (the only deity to whom the chiefs sacrificed their own blood), namely Tamagastat, and it is the only major ceremony which can be tentatively ascribed to one of the greater gods. The symbolism is rather obvious. A dance is first held to attract or compel the attention of the god; sacrifice of blood is made to propitiate the deity, who is then addressed in prayer.

A different form of appeal to the gods is described by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII). Each year a great chief shut himself up in solitude in a temple to pray for the welfare of the people. At the

end of the year he came forth and was received by all with great feasting, and his nose was pierced, which was considered an honor. His place was then taken by another cacique. In the less important temples the commoners were allowed to pass a year in similar fashion. Those who did so could not have intercourse with women during the period, but if married they returned to their wives when the year was over. Food was sent to them by their kin, and was carried to the temples by young boys, for no woman was allowed in the temple courtyard. The custom of secluding a great lord in a temple for a long period of time is found also in South America. Among the Chibcha of the Bogota region the heir to the *Zipa* was secluded in a temple for a period of five years, although he was allowed to come out at night. At the conclusion of the appointed time his nose and ears were pierced (Joyce, 1912, p. 20).

#### BIRTH CEREMONIES

García has stated that the women were taken to the temples for a ceremony of purification after the birth of a child, but this assertion is open to doubt, as the women were ordinarily excluded from the temples.

#### DEATH CEREMONIES

Two types of burial were customary: cremation and inhumation. When a cacique died, his body was burned amid a great pile of mantles, shirts, cloaks, feathers, fans, food, and gold. His ashes were placed in an earthen vessel, which was then buried in ashes in front of his house. Sometimes a small hut was erected over the place of interment (pl. II). The common people were inhumed, and all their property was placed with them if they had no heirs. Children were wrapped in a mantle and buried in front of the door of the house. Pottery images were broken over the graves of the deceased to keep fresh their memory for a space of twenty or thirty days.

#### CONFESSION

As in Mexico, confession was a recognized practice. Andagoya (p. 34) says that it was made in the presence of a priest, but an assembly of chiefs of the Nicarao told Francisco de Bobadilla (Oviedo, lib. XLII, cap. III) that—

an old man is appointed for the purpose, in token of which he wears a gourd attached to his neck; and when he dies, we assemble in the council house,

and appoint in his place the one who seems the most worthy; thus the succession is kept up, and we regard the office as one of great dignity. And this old man may have no wife, and lives in his own house and not in any temple or oratory. . . . We tell him when we have broken any of our feast days, and have not kept them, or when we have spoken ill of our gods for not sending rain, and when we have said that they were not good; and the old men impose a penance upon us for the temple, and when we have confessed it, we depart, feeling much relieved and pleased at having told them, and as though we had not done wrong. . . . And the old men say to us, "Go; and do not do this again." We follow this custom because we know it to be good, and believe that in this way we shall not fall into more evil, and will feel free from that which we have already committed.

Confession was not permitted until the age of puberty was reached, and it was customary to make confession within a day of the commission of the fault. The old man was not permitted to disclose what was told to him.

#### MAGIC

"Both sexes are greatly addicted to witchcraft," says Oviedo, "and hold much communication with the devil." Those gifted with the proper power could transform themselves at will into "tigers, and lions, and turkeys, and fowls, and lizards." It was firmly believed by the natives that they possessed the power to kill with their eyes.

#### MYTHOLOGY

*Creation and Flood Myth*—The Nicaraos believed that the world and heavens had been created by Tamagastat and Cipattonal. These deities lived on the earth in association with mankind, and in appearance they resembled the Indians. After a time a flood came which destroyed all living things except the primal pair, who escaped to the heavens, which had already been created. After the waters had subsided, the two gods returned to the earth, which was repopled by their descendants, and recreated all the animals. The golden age was then apparently renewed, but after a time the gods again departed to the heavens. They did not cut themselves off completely from the Indians at once, however, for Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. III) states that they were accustomed to speak in the temples until the death of the cacique Xostoval, the father of Cuylomegilte.

*Beliefs Concerning Death and the Soul*—"When they are doomed to die shortly," the Nicaraos told Francisco de Bobadilla (Oviedo, lib. XLII, cap. III), "they see visions and people, and snakes and lizards,

and many fearful things, at which they become terrified, and have great fear, and by which they know that they are soon to die; but that which they see does not speak and does nothing but frighten them; and some of the dead return in visions of many kinds, and frighten those who see them."

After death had taken place, there was no further existence for those who had died in their beds, but, if death had occurred in battle, the *yulio*, or soul, went to serve Tamagastat and Cipattonal in the heavens, and the spirit of the warrior was hailed with the words, "Here come my children." The souls of the wicked—we don't know what they considered wicked—went to the land of Miqtanteot, which was beneath the earth, and was an evil place.

In regard to the nature of the *yulio*, the natives told Francisco de Bobadilla that "it is not the heart which goes, but is rather that which keeps them alive, and being gone, leaves the body lifeless." And again that the *yulio* was "the air which issues through the mouth."

Children who died before they had been weaned or had eaten corn were believed to live again and to return to the house of their parents, who were able to recognize them.

## II. GUETAR RELIGION

Very little information exists as to the religion of the Guetar. We have no knowledge of their gods or their temples, and but little of their ceremonies.

### PRIESTS

"They have their idols," writes Agustín de Zevallos (Fernández, Colección de Documentos, v, p. 156), "and for the administration of their cult, priests are named and appointed, who are witches or those to whom the devil when consulted gives replies which they give to the people; they are held in much regard, for it is thought that they contain some divine essence as prophets who can foresee future events and what must happen, and they do give notice of what is passing in other regions distant and remote from their own."

### CEREMONIES

Human sacrifice occurred every moon, but we know nothing as to the method or purpose. Cannibalism was present, but was not a constant feature.

A war dance was witnessed by Juan Vásquez de Coronado, who states that it was well worth seeing, and this intrepid explorer has briefly described a burial feast (1908, p. 30) :

"They found . . . this *cacique* Tuarco in a drunken debauch, with a dead Indian wrapped in a quantity of mantles, with gold and other things, on top of a frame, which no one touched, and there bewailed him seventy men and an equal number of women, after their fashion . . . Four days before they had sacrificed four or six boys to bury them with the deceased."

Columbus went ashore at the village of Cariay, or Cariari, where his men entered several houses. Says Las Casas (lib. II, cap. XXI) :

They had sepulchers in which were the bodies of the dead, dried and spiced, with no bad odor, wrapped in mantles or sheets of cotton, and above the sepulcher were boards, and on them were carved figures of animals, and on some was the face of him who was buried, and with the body were jewels of gold and beads and other things they held most precious.

The preservation of the body after death is a feature not uncommon in the northwestern part of South America, and also prevalent on the Isthmus, where, Andagoya (p. 15) says, the body was hung up and dried by placing pans of charcoal around it. In Costa Rica the bodies were embalmed with resin extracted from the *caraña* tree.

### III. CHOROTEGAN RELIGION

#### PANTHEON

There is little to say about the gods of the Chorotega. Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XI) has recorded that "in Matuari, they call God *Tipotani*, and they say that there were a man and a woman from whom all mortals sprang, and the man was called *Nenbithia*, and the woman *Nenguitamali*." Douay (1891, p. 17) states that *Nakupuy* was the name of a god of the Mangue.

In the ceremony described below, the first blood to issue from the sacrificed victim is offered to the sun, and I am inclined to believe that the principal deities of the Chorotega were the sun and the moon, and that in general their religious conceptions were of South American type, though strongly colored by contact with their Nahuatl neighbors.

A belief in local spirits is exhibited by the tales of the old woman who lived in the crater of Masaya.

## TEMPLES

The chief temples in Nicoya were called *teyopa*. They were probably very similar to the Nicarao edifices, and, like them, were surrounded by small chapels containing idols (Oviedo, lib. XXIX, cap. XXI).

## CEREMONIES

We have knowledge in full of only one Chorotegan ceremony, which was witnessed by Oviedo and described by him (lib. XLII, cap. XI) in the following words:

Three times a year, on stated days which are now regarded as principal feast days, the *cacique* of Nicoya, his chiefs, and most of his people, men as well as women, painted and adorned with feathers, according to their usual custom, dance an *areyto* similar to a *contrapas*, the women holding each other by the arms and hands, and the men surrounding them, linked in similar fashion, and with an interval of four or five paces between the two circles, for in the space between them others go in and out, giving drink to the dancers, who do not cease moving their feet, nor drinking of that wine of theirs; and the men gesticulate with their bodies and heads, and the women imitate them. On that day the women wear *gutares* (or new shoes); and after this dance, which takes place round the sacrificial mound before the principal temple in the *plaza*, has lasted four hours or more, they seize a man or woman (whom they have previously selected for the sacrifice), and ascending to the top of the sacrificial mound they cut open the victim's breast, and remove the heart; and the first blood is offered in sacrifice to the sun. They then decapitate that body and several others upon a stone slab, which is placed on the summit of the said mound, and the blood of the rest they offer to their particular idols and gods, whose images they anoint with it; the intercessors, or priests, or, to put it better, their hellish ministers and executioners afterward smearing it on their own faces and lips; and they send the dead bodies rolling down the mound, and they are picked up at the base thereof, and afterward eaten as a holy and very precious viand. As soon as this accursed sacrifice is accomplished, all the women give a loud shriek, and flee toward the mountains and woods and sierras, singly or in couples in spite of the efforts of their husbands and kinsmen, who bring them back, some with entreaties, others with promises and gifts; and in some cases, where severer methods are necessary, they are beaten and kept bound till the frenzy has passed and she who is captured farthest away is greatly admired and receives most praise.

Upon that day, or the next in order of the festival of three, they collect many bundles of corn, bound together, and place them around the sacrificial mound; and there, first the masters or priests of Lucifer, who stay in their temples, and next the *cacique*, and then his chiefs in order of rank, until no man is left, mutilate and scarify with small sharp knives of flint their tongues, and ears, or genitals (each according to the degree of devotion he feels),

and swell the corn with his blood, afterward dividing it so that each gets a share, no matter how small, and eat it as something very blessed.

In many ways this ceremony is affiliated with Mexican practices, especially in the manner of human sacrifice and in the eating of corn on which blood has been offered. However, the fact that it was held three times a year does not argue a Mexican origin, and, in fact, suggests that the Mexican calendar was not in use. It is probable that the dancing and flight of the women are purely Chorotegan and that the sacrifice of men and blood are interpolations of Mexican origin.

#### LOCAL SPIRITS

Another type of sacrifice was the casting of victims into the crater of Masaya in order to cause the old woman within to prophesy or give counsel. This custom is described by Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. v) as follows:

I heard the *cacique* of *Lenderi* declare that on several occasions he had, with other *caciques*, descended to the level space of the pit of *Massaya*, and that there came forth from that pit a very old woman completely naked, with whom they held their *monexico* (or secret council), and whom they consulted as to whether they should make war, or avoid it, or grant a truce to their enemies; they never took any important step nor action of any sort, without her opinion and judgment; and she predicted their victory or defeat, and whether it would rain and they would reap much maize, and what weather and events each approaching season would bring forth; and matters always resulted as the old woman prophesied. And a day or so before or after these councils took place, they would offer sacrifice to her, throwing into the pit one, two, or even more men, and several women and youths and maidens; and these victims went most willingly to the sacrifice. And that since the Christians had come to the land, the old woman no longer wished to come forth and give audience to the Indians, and hardly ever did so, except from time to time, and she had told them that the Christians were evil, and that she would not have dealings with them as formerly until they had driven them from the land. I asked him how they got down to the plain and he replied that at first there had been a way of descending by the cliff; but that the plain had become larger, and earth had fallen in from all sides, thus making the descent impossible. I asked him what would become of the old woman after the *monexico*, or council, which they held with her, and what age she had, and what appearance; and he said that she was very old, and wrinkled, that her breasts hung to her navel, and her hair was scanty and upstanding, her teeth long and sharp like those of a dog, her color darker and blacker than that of the Indians, and her eyes sunken and glowing; in short he described her such as the Devil must look. If he told the truth, she must indeed be the fiend, and thus the communications between him and

the Indians cannot be denied. And after their consultations, the infernal old woman would enter the pit, and be seen no more until the next *monexico*.

The Indians speak copiously of these and other vanities, and since in their paintings it is their custom to depict the devil as hideously, and as full of tails and horns and mouths and other grimaces as our painters are accustomed to show him, at the feet of the Archangel Saint Michael, or the Apostle Saint Bartholomew, I suspect that they have seen him, and that he must show himself to them in this form; and thus they place him in their oratories, and houses, and the temples of their idolatries and diabolical sacrifices.

Upon the summit of *Massaya*, near the mouth, lay a great heap of broken jars and plates, and crocks, and jugs, and other vessels, and some that were whole; and of good glazed or earthen ware which the Indians, when they went thither were accustomed to carry, filled with viands and drinks of various sorts, saying that they were food for the old woman, and which they left there to gratify and appease her when some earthquake occurred or some severe season was in progress; for they believed that all their good or evil proceeded from her will.

#### DIVINATION

The Indians were much addicted to augury, says Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XI), and he tells how the natives of León witnessed a comet on the night of the nineteenth of January, 1529, and on succeeding nights, from which the old men prophesied that many Indians must travel and die on the roads. "And well might they say or divine this," states Oviedo, "for the Christians burdened and exhausted them, using them as they would animals, to draw or carry upon their backs from one place to another everything which was commanded them."

#### IV. MARIBIO RELIGION

The Maribio had temples similar to those of the Nicaraos, and it is probable that the latter had exercised much influence on their religion. The following passage from Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XI) shows that they followed a practice somewhat similar to that of the warrior devotees of the Aztec god Xipe:

#### FLAYING CEREMONY

One cruel and noteworthy occurrence, never before known, I shall relate here, although it did not take place during the time I was in *Nicaragua*, but a year and half, or a little more, before, during the conquest of the captain Francisco Fernández, who was a lieutenant of Pedrarias; and it happened

thus; that, since the Indians perceived the daring and vigor of the Spaniards, and greatly feared the horses, for they had never before seen such animals, and since they could not spear and kill them they thought of a new ruse of war, by which they believed they could frighten the horses, and put them to flight, and vanquish the Spaniards. And for this purpose, five leagues from the city of *León*, in the province known as that of the *Maribios*, they slew numerous old Indian men and women of their own kin, and neighbors, and removed their skins after killing them, and ate the flesh, and clothed themselves in the skins, with the raw side outward, so that nothing but the eyes appeared of the living Indian, thinking, as I say, that by this trick of theirs, the Christians would flee from such a sight, and their horses would be terrified. When the Christians came upon the field, the Indians did not refuse them battle; rather, they placed in the van those Indians who were clad in the others, and with their bows and arrows they began the combat, courageously, and with much shouting and noise of drums. The Christians were much amazed at their boldness, and even alarmed at the sight, but they soon realized what it was, and began to return the attack, and to kill those who were clad in the other dead. Since the Indians perceived the fruitlessness of their artifice, they took flight, and the Christians won the day, and since that time the Indians declare that the Christians were not men, but *teotes*, which means gods, and those gods of theirs are devils, and not deities. And from that day, the country where the said event took place has been known as the province of *Desollados* (the flayed).

#### WITCHCRAFT

It was commonly believed throughout Nicaragua that certain people (called *texoxes* among the Nicaraos) could assume animal form. Oviedo (lib. XLII, cap. XII) relates of the cacique Galtonal, of the Maribio town of Gaucama, that—

he lay down to sleep with his child in his arms, and his wife beside him, and around them five or six others of his Indians. And being thus, they all slept, and the child was taken from his arms, and carried off, and the father and mother and their Indians, and others of that household rose and searched for it, but could not find it. And when day came, the *cacique* told the said Farfan and Canon how the *texoxes* had carried off his son to eat him, and the parents and their Indians wept for him. And they asked of him how he knew that they were *texoxes* who had stolen his child, and he said yes, that they were *texoxes*; because, . . . on the preceding night he had seen them, and they were two great animals, one white and the other black. And he began anew to search for the child, and he found traces of the footprints of the said animals, like those of large dogs; and in a short while, it might have been two hours after daybreak, or even earlier, he found certain fragments of the child's head, well-gnawed, about a stone's throw or two from where they had taken the child from the arms of its father, and blood scattered over the grass in many places. Which fragments and blood of the child I saw,

and heard from the *cacique* all that I have related, with many tears which he shed; and what has been narrated was verified in my presence that morning, by those whom I have mentioned. And beside the fragments of the child was a small necklace of green stones similar to emerald agates, which the child had had round its neck; and the mother took them up, and kissed them with many sighs, and anguish in her heart.

PART II

THE PACIFIC AREA



## CHAPTER I

# GENERAL CONSIDERATION OF THE ARCHEOLOGY

### LIMITS OF CULTURE AREAS

THE problem of delimiting culture areas in Nicaragua and Costa Rica is a difficult one, owing to lack of an exact knowledge of the archeology. In a general way it seems that western Nicaragua, together with western Costa Rica as far south as the entrance of the Gulf of Nicoya, contained an aboriginal culture primarily Central American in character. A different civilization, however, flourished east of the Gulf of Nicoya in the north central Highlands and Atlantic coast of Costa Rica, a culture which extended southward, with local modifications, into Colombia and Ecuador. No geographic names adequately cover these two areas, hence they are referred to in this work as the *Pacific area* and the *Highland area* (fig. 1).

The territory embraced by the *Highland* culture includes the central Cordilleras of northern Costa Rica, the great valleys of Alajuela, San José, and Cartago, and the Atlantic slopes to the eastward. North of the great volcanoes, Poás, Barba, Irazú, and Turrialba, lies the unknown plain of San Carlos, which, archeologically, is probably transitional between the Highland and Nicaraguan types. The line between the Highland and Chiriqui areas probably runs eastward from Point Herradura along the Cordillera de la Candelaria and thence to a point on the Atlantic coast a little way south of Limón, thus concurring with the tribal boundaries. The Chiriqui area runs southward from this line at least as far as the Panama canal. This region might be further subdivided.

The territory between Alajuela and the southern tip of the Nicoya peninsula is but little known archeologically. Lacking definite data, the writer has regarded it as transitional between the Pacific and Highland areas. Certain pottery types which extend from Nicoya to the Cartago valley are not uncommon, and probably center in this *transitional region*. These have been treated with the Pacific or

the Highland area, however, according to the origin and relationship of the designs employed.

Turning to Nicaragua, a fact of importance is that the Peninsula of Nicoya, now a part of Costa Rica, forms both ethnologically and archeologically a part of Nicaragua. From the Peninsula of Nicoya a fairly uniform culture runs northwestward along the shores of the Pacific as far as Fonseca bay, penetrating the interior toward the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua as far as the watershed between the great lakes and the North sea. For this region the name *Pacific area* is suggested.

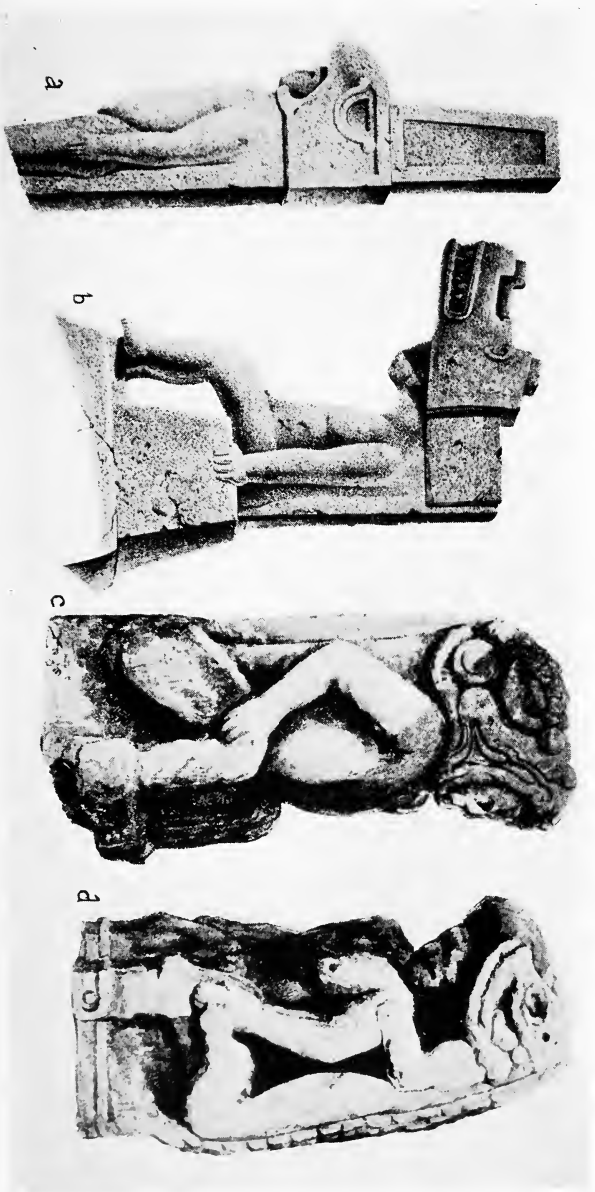
The Atlantic slopes of Nicaragua are practically unknown archeologically, yet the few data available show that this region is distinct from the western part of that country. The most typical artifacts, large stone bowls, also come from the northeastern portion of Honduras, and it is probable that this culture extends beyond Truxillo.

The territory north of Lake Managua to Ocotal and Juticalpa, and thence eastward across the central portion of Honduras as far as Copan, is little known. The eastern part of this region, however, is known to contain the pottery described herein as Luna Ware, which has been found on the islands of Lake Nicaragua and to the eastward and northward of the lake. To the west in Honduras are ruins, perhaps of Chorotegan type, such as La Florida, also several large sites which are assigned to the Lenca, and finally such great Maya cities as Copan and Quirigua.

#### PACIFIC AREA

As yet no exhaustive exploration has been carried on at any site in the Pacific area, with the exception of Hartman's work in the southern portion of the Nicoya peninsula. The results of Bransford's investigations in Nicaragua have been published only in part, while the studies by Bovallius were limited largely to objects above ground. The researches by these three investigators, together with the observations by Squier and the manuscript material of Flint, form the basis of the presentation here made of the general archeological problems. Unfortunately the work of the men cited was not systematized, so that there are several geographical gaps, notably the district between León and the Gulf of Fonseca, about which little or nothing is known.

In discussing the general archeological features, no attempt has



STONE STATUES. ZAPATERO ISLAND, NICARAGUA  
(AFTER LOTHROP, 1921)





STONE STATUE. NICARAGUA  
(COURTESY OF W. H. HOLMES)



been made to enter into great detail, and observations have been limited to the most obvious types and to those forms which have bearing on the pottery. The large stone figures have been discussed at some length because the problems raised by them tend to throw this region into the general current of Central American archeology.

### STONE STATUES

Many years ago the attention of students was directed to a series of large stone statues found near the Nicaraguan lakes by Squier (1852), who published a series of drawings. Bovallius (1886) also produced a number of illustrations, and individual specimens have been published by other authors. Original examples may be seen *in situ*, or may be studied in the Peabody Museum of Harvard University or in the United States National Museum.

The statues in question, from four to twelve feet high, represent human beings, often with some associated animal form. A distinguishing feature is the columnar base, usually with a simple capital on which the figure rests. Several types worthy of discussion must be noted. One of the commonest forms is a standing human figure bearing an animal, usually an alligator, on its back and shoulders (pl. iv, *d*). In a second type the man is seated and carries on his shoulders the head of an animal (pls. iv, *b*; v); a third class is a human figure with an animal or an animal head on its shoulders, within the jaws of which the human head is enclosed (pl. iv, *c*). In these three types we evidently have a developmental series, for conventionalization of the animal forms takes place through the elimination of parts until only the head remains. Conventionalization of the head itself is seen in pl. iv, *a*. It should be remarked that this series is obviously related to common Mexican and Mayan concepts, but differs in one important particular: in the art of the Mexican peoples and the Maya an *animal figure* is portrayed with a human head in its jaws; the Nicaraguan statues represent a *human figure* with its head enclosed in the jaws of an animal carried on its back.

Other types of interest include a man with a large gorget suspended on the breast or held in the hand, a class which has affinities with very much smaller stone figures found in the Highlands of Costa Rica. Another form of wide distribution is a man seated on a very tall column, often with a tenon-like appendage on his head (pl. vii,

*d, f*). We should also mention certain statues with crossed arms suggestive of carved jade forms from Nicoya, as well as a seated female type holding a child, related to various pottery figurines.

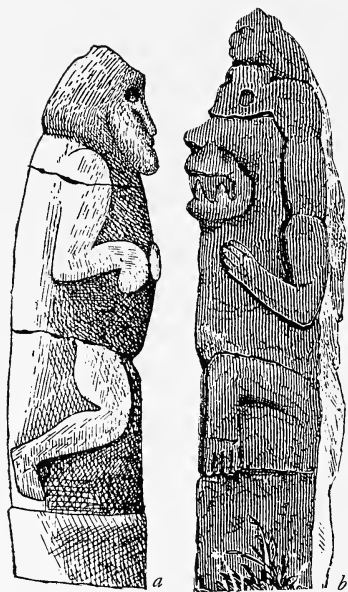
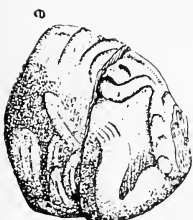
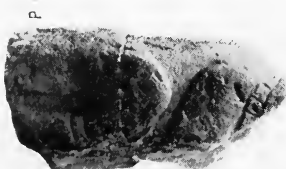


FIG. 10.—Stone statues. *a*, Ulua valley, Honduras (after Gordon); *b*, Zapatero island, Nicaragua (after Squier).

Most important of all, however, is the class seen in pl. VII, *b, c*, of which we reproduce two examples. The lower part of the face is covered by a projection suggesting a bird's bill and which calls to mind the famous Tuxtla statuette. This small jade carving, inscribed with the earliest Maya date yet brought to light, has puzzled students by the non-Maya style of the art. The Tuxtla statuette also resembles in outline and "feeling" a type of large statue found in the highlands of Guatemala (pl. VI, *c*), which in turn is closely connected with statues found at Copan (pl. VI, *d, e*). These specimens were discovered in the foundations of stelæ 5 and 4, dated respectively 9.14.0.0.0 (452 A. D.) and 9.17.12.13.0 (523 A. D.). From this evidence we infer that the Nicaraguan statues, if not actually early specimens themselves, at least belong to a comparatively early current of art.

Other statues of Nicaraguan type have also been found in Honduras, but not so placed as to give any clue to their age. At La Florida, sixty miles north of Copan, the writer found the carving shown in pl. VI, *b*, a seated human figure bearing an animal on its back, a type we have seen to be typical of Nicaragua. In the Ulua valley, Gordon (1898, p. 12) discovered a carving also similar to Nicaraguan examples (fig. 10). In addition there are reports of such statues along the little-known upper reaches of the rivers of eastern Honduras. It thus appears that large stone carvings of a more or less uniform type extend over the greater part of Central America, as is evident from the following list of sites at which they have been noted:



STONE STATUES

1.—ZAPATERO ISLAND, NICARAGUA (AFTER BOVALLIUS, 1886). 2.—LA FLORIDA, DEPARTMENT OF COPAN, HONDURAS (AFTER LOTHROP, 1921). 3.—FINCA AREVALO, GUATEMALA (AFTER LOTHROP, 1921). 4. 5.—COPAN, HONDURAS (COURTESY OF CARNEGIE INSTITUTION OF WASHINGTON)





STONE STATUES

*a*—SAN ANDRÉS TUXTLA, MEXICO (AFTER HOLMES, 1907). . . *b-d, f*—ZAPATERO ISLAND, NICARAGUA (AFTER BOVALLIUS, 1886, AND SQUIER, 1852). . . *e*—COMITAN, MEXICO (AFTER SELER, 1901)



*In Nicaragua:* Acoyapa, Alta Gracia, Bluenose, La Ceiba island, Juigalpa, Los Angeles, Los Cocos, Los Corales, Madeira island, Mascarrán island, Río Mico, Momotombo, Nandaimé, Norome, Pensacola, Río San Pablo, San Pedro de Lobago, Cerro Santiago, Solentiname, Tancabulea, Tierra Blanca, La Virgen, Punta del Sapote, Punta de las Figuras, and El Amado on Zapatero island.

*In Costa Rica:* Boquerones, Hacienda Santa Rosa, Panamá, Salinas bay, Siete Cueros, Jiménez, Las Mercedes.

*In Honduras:* Ulua valley, Tegucigalpa, La Florida, Chinamite, Quesalteca, Guampu river, El Patate, Patuca river, Cuyamel river, and Copan.

*In Guatemala:* Finca Arevalo, Santa Cruz Quiché.

*In Mexico:* Comitán.

Who made these statues? For several reasons the answer seems to be that the Chorotegans made them. In the first place, the Maya, Toltec, Aztec, Zapotec, and other advanced tribes may be ruled out of consideration both on stylistic grounds and because none of them, so far as we know, ever inhabited even approximately the territory in which the stone statues under consideration have been found. Again, the Chorotega are known to have occupied much of the region in which they have been discovered, and all

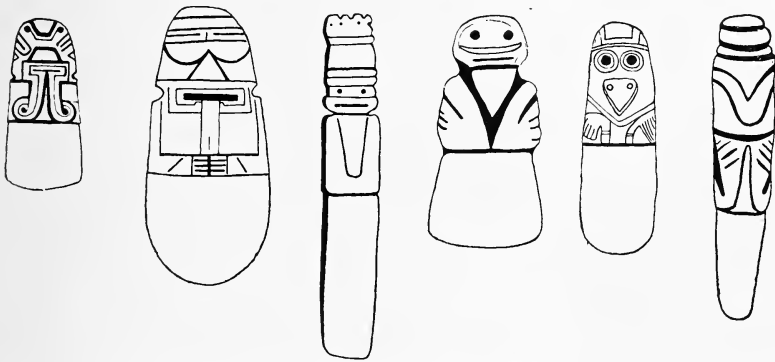


FIG. 11.—Jade pendants, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica. (After Lothrop, 1921.)

the statues lie within the habitat of the most widely separated Chorotegan tribes. Finally, there is direct stylistic connection both with jade (fig. 11) and with pottery (fig. 140, *b*) of admitted Chorotegan manufacture.

The evidence of the stone statues is important, for it leads to the belief that the Chorotegans were one of the well-advanced American peoples at the earliest time of which we have knowledge. The

finds in Honduras, especially at Copan and La Florida, indicate that the Chorotega lived there before the coming of the Maya, who probably drove them out and caused their migration to Nicaragua and to Chiapas. The prisoners seen on Mayan Old Empire stelæ may well be Chorotega.

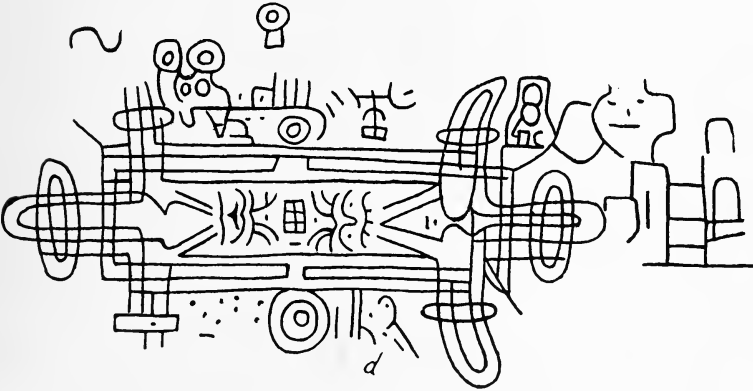
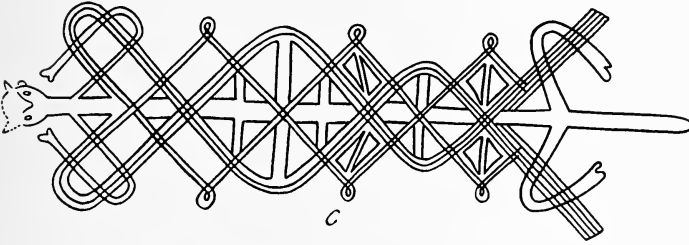
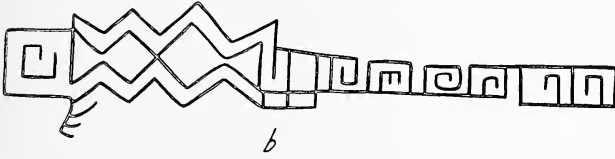
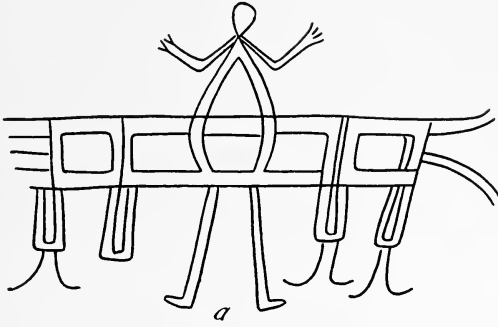
#### PICTOGRAPHS

Cuttings on the surface of natural boulders are found in the greater part of the New World, and the Pacific region is no exception. There exist two types which tend to merge into each other. The first consists of relatively simple patterns, such as are seen in fig. 12 and fig. 13, *a*, *b*, which delineate human figures, monkeys, and geometric patterns. The resemblance of pictographs of this class to those found on the northern shores of South America, particularly Venezuela, and to the West Indian types, is obvious, and is a subject which merits further study. Similar figures are often scratched on the plaster of Maya buildings in northern Guatemala.

The second type, much more elaborate, is based on animal figures which have become geometric complexes. Thus fig. 13, *c* and *d*, exhibit two birds, identifiable by the general outline and by the head and legs, although the bodies have become intricate geometric motives. Further examples are shown in pl. VIII, *a-c*, in which the animals represented are man, the alligator, and the serpent or dragon. This type, which strongly suggests string figures, culminates in such an elaborate labyrinthine conception as that shown in pl. VIII, *d*, which consists of a double-headed animal, with outstretched paws, and faces on its back, the whole being rendered more difficult to perceive by the presence of juxtaposed patterns of the simple type.

#### MOUNDS

*A. Sacrificial*—The sacrificial mounds were shaped like “heaps of wheat or barley” with a flattened top on which lay the stone of sacrifice. The mound stood in the temple courtyard, and the idols were within the temple, so that it was necessary to carry the blood of the victim a considerable distance to anoint the images. This description partially accords with the archeological remains, for mounds composed of rough blocks of stone, about which were placed stone statues, have been found in several localities. The plan (pl. CXCIX) of a ruin on Zapatero island perhaps represents a temple



NICARAGUA PICTOGRAPHS

*a*—QUEBRADA HURTADO (LENGTH, 5 FT.). *b*—JINOTEPE (LENGTH, 10 FT.). *c*—SAN ANDRÉS (LENGTH, 4.5 FT.). *d*—SANTA CLARA. (*a-c*, AFTER FLINT; *d*, AFTER SAPPER, 1899)



complex consisting of several sacred edifices, each with its courtyards, idols, and sacrificial mounds.

B. *Domiciliary*—Peter Martyr (p. 30) tells us that the palaces of the chiefs stood upon low mounds, and again one may identify archeological remains with his historical description. A fine example of this type was discovered by Squier (1852, I, pp. 317-323) on the Cerro Santiago near León. This mound was 200 feet long, 60 feet wide, and 10 feet high. Boyle (1856, p. 43) describes a mound at Libertad, composed entirely of stone, which was 58 yards long and 40 yards wide.

Before leaving the subject it should be noted that in this region the temples were not elevated on mounds. This marks a sharp departure from the Mexican and Mayan practice.

C. *Burial*—Small circular mounds, twenty to forty feet in diameter and not more than six feet high, were used for burial. They were constructed of earth and stone, and in some instances a stone column, two or three feet long, was sunk flush with the surface of the mound. Alfaro (1893, p. 8) writes that the graves of Nicoya sometimes consisted of a stone mound above which projected a column covered with pictographs. This custom forms a link with the south, for graves covered by mounds from which columns project are found in southern Costa Rica. Certain burial mounds at Los Cocos and Los Angeles on

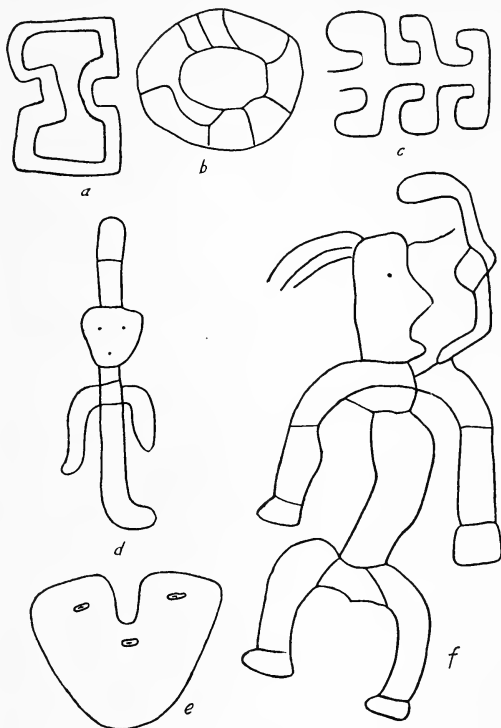


FIG. 12.—Pictographs in Nicaragua. *a-c*, La Seca; *d*, La Ceiba island; *e*, Piedra Pintada, Jinotepe; *f*, Zapatero island. (After Flint MS.)

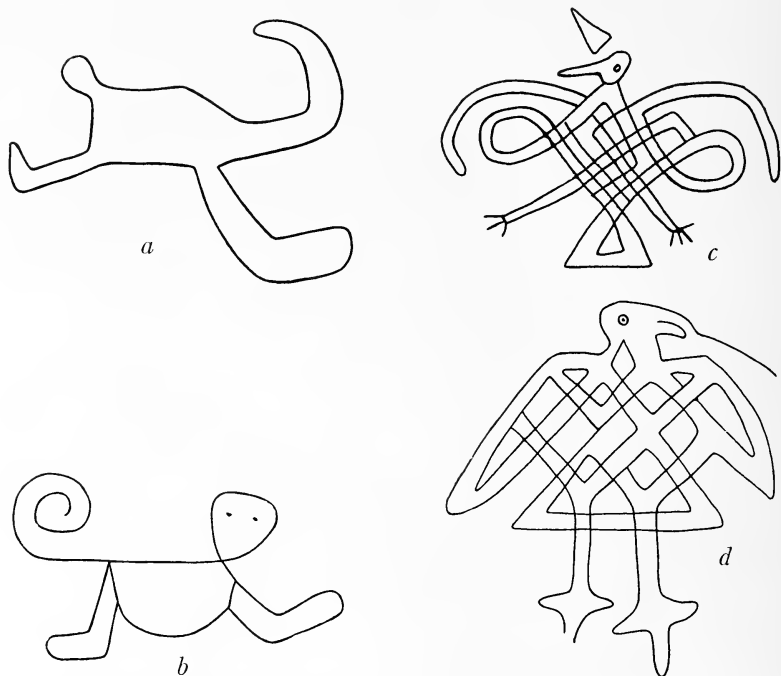


FIG. 13.—Pictographs in Nicaragua representing monkeys and birds. *a*, *b*, Lake Guiteras; *c*, San Andrés; *d*, Riachuelo cave. (After Flint MS.)

Ometepe island were surrounded by a ring formed of stone slabs set on end. This practice suggests the typical burial mounds of Venezuela, in which pottery burial urns are found.

D. *Rubbish-heaps*—Several sites are marked by mounds composed of rubbish. They are often of considerable size; the one at Filadelfia (Costa Rica) is six to ten feet high and several hundred yards long.

E. *Shell-heaps*—There are shell-heaps at several points on the coast of Nicaragua and Costa Rica. A typical example is found on Panamá bay (Costa Rica).

#### METHODS OF BURIAL

A. *Urn burial*—Burial in urns was one of the favorite methods employed in this area. Three types of urns are found: boot-shape, circular, and boat-shape. These are discussed in connection with ceramics (see page 253). The body was usually introduced into



METATES. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA  
(AFTER HOLMES, 1908)



the urn immediately after death, but was sometimes disarticulated after decomposition of the flesh. Cremation and burial of the ashes in urns were also practised by the upper classes.

Secondary burial is such a widespread custom in the Americas that no special significance can be attached to its presence. Cremation and burial of the ashes in urns were common, though not universal, among the Mexicans, except the Zapotec, and also among the Maya. Burial of the unburned bones or complete body in an urn, however, is a South American custom; in that continent it occurs from Venezuela to the Argentine.

The sites at which urn burial is reported are: La Ceiba, El Menco, Hacienda Baltazar, Hacienda Luna, Libertad, Potosí, San Jorge, Filadelfia, Hacienda San Rafael, Alta Gracia, Chiliate, Diriamba, Juigalpa, Managua, Masaya, Mascarrán island, Rivas, Río San Pablo, San Pedro de Lobago, Solentiname, Tola, Boquerones, Panamá, Hacienda El Pelón.

B. *Inhumation*—Inhumation, often in a mound, was practised in all parts of the Nicaraguan region, and it is almost universal in the Peninsula of Nicoya. At Las Guacas and Las Casitas, Hartman (1907a, p. 15) was able to determine the outline of the pits in which the body had been placed, owing to the peculiar nature of the soil. At these sites, and indeed at most others, secondary burial was prevalent, and the bones of the body are found heaped about the skull (pl. CXCVII).

Farther north, at such sites as Bagaces, the graves are marked by four columns of stone set at the corners. This corresponds to a grave type found in the Chiriqui area.

#### OBJECTS FROM GRAVES

*Metates*—The most elaborate type of metate, or grinding stone, in the Americas was developed by the inhabitants of the Peninsula of Nicoya, whence they are found in decreasing numbers as far as Salvador and Tenampua in central Honduras. The Nicoya metate is primarily distinguished from the Guetar and Chiriqui forms by the fact that it has but three legs, while the latter have four. Hartman (1907a) divides the Nicoyan type into two classes, one marked by circular legs and the other by elaborately carved triangular legs. The latter (pl. 1x) usually has a projecting animal head at one end, while the first kind is usually of greater size. Both classes are deco-

rated with elaborate carvings on the bottom and ends of the grinding plate. The class with circular legs is often adorned with animal figures, and the triangular-leg type with geometric patterns. The hand-stones, or *manos*, are of a length greater than the width of the grinding plate (see fig. 14).

*Jade Amulets*—The use of jade ornaments is one of the most characteristic features of the Nicoyan region, and celt-shape pen-



FIG. 14.—Method of making bread. (After Benzoni.)

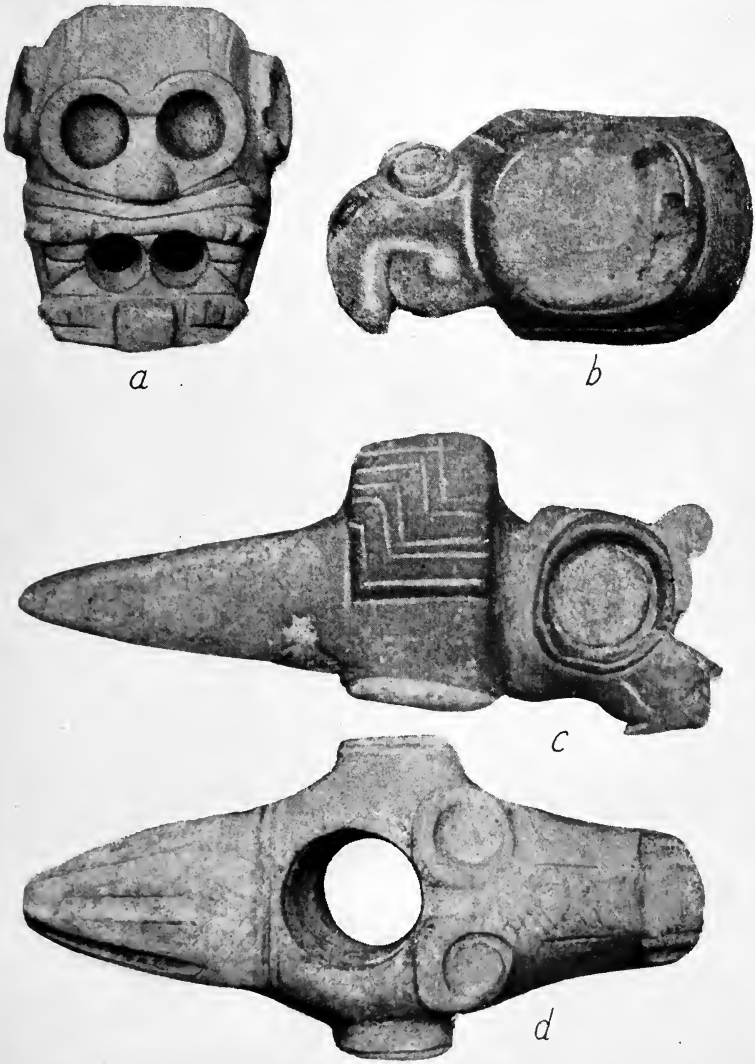
dants (fig. 11) are particularly common. Apparently it was customary to make a celt, which, if the stone proved to be of good quality, was then sawed into two or more fragments which were carved and polished. Stylistically these pendants appear to be related to the large stone statues. That these amulets were greatly appreciated by the natives is proved by their wide distribution. Two

specimens have been found in the Ulua valley (Honduras), one of Nicoya jade and the other apparently of a local stone, while similar pieces have been found in the Chiriqui area. Other objects of jade are labrets, small effigies, and long tubular beads.

The source of the jade is not known, and we should not forget that much of the so-called American jade is really some softer green stone such as serpentine, bowenite, copper-stained quartz, etc.

*Gorget*s—Circular stone gorgets, usually broken, are common finds, of which examples are given in pl. XI, *a*, *d*, *e*. They are always pierced for suspension, and sometimes additional holes were drilled near the circumference, perhaps for the attachment of feathers or bells. Similar forms are found in the pottery of this area and in the goldwork of the region to the north and south.

*Stone Club-heads*—Club-heads of stone have been found in some numbers in the graves of Nicoya (pl. x). Hartman (1907a, p. 53)



STONE CLUB-HEADS. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA



has classified them as human heads, mammal heads, bird heads, birds, two-legged monsters, alligators, and those without zoömorphie character. The latter are either round or star-shape. Round club-heads are frequently found in the Guatemalan highlands, and star-shape ones are characteristic of the west coast of South America.

*Atlatl Pegs*—One of the most characteristic archeological artifacts of northwestern South America is a small stone peg, which was lashed to the shaft of the atlatl, or spear-thrower, and served

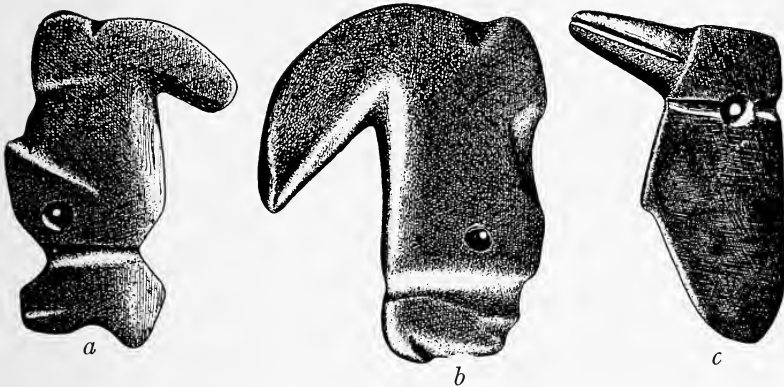


FIG. 15.—Stone pegs for spear-throwers; length of *b*,  $2\frac{1}{8}$  in. (After Hartman.)

as a point against which the base of the spear was rested. Similar objects (fig. 15), though not in large numbers, have been found in Nicoya.

*Bark-beaters*—Two forms of bark-beater, used for making a coarse paper-like cloth, occur in Middle America (pl. XI, *b*, *c*), one consisting of a stone disc with grooves on one face, which was mounted on a wooden handle, and the other of handle and beater cut in one piece of stone. The first type occurs in many localities, while the second has been observed in the Oaxaca and Vera Cruz regions (Mexico), Quirigua (Guatemala), Nicoya (Costa Rica), and the Cauca valley (Colombia). In aboriginal times probably most of these implements were made of wood, like those which persist today among some Mexican tribes, and the form was usually that of the stone type with handle.

*Stirrup-shape Rubbing Stones*—These objects (fig. 16) have been found by Hartman at Orosi and on Mt. Irazú in the Highlands

of Costa Rica, at Carrizal near Puntarenas, and at Las Guacas in Nicoya. They represent a specialized form of rubbing stone, comparable with our flatiron, in which the user grasps a handle above the working surface. Similar objects have been found near Vera Cruz, Mexico.

*Axes*—Monolithic axes of the type shown in pl. XII, *c*, *c*, have been found in considerable numbers on the east coast of Nicaragua. They also occur, though with less frequency, in the lake region of Nicaragua. The distribution and affiliations of these ax forms are at present uncertain and merit further study. The example shown in pl. XII, *d*, is from southern Costa Rica, and is not unlike the West Indian monolithic ax.

The double-bitted ax shown in pl. XII, *a*, is characteristic of the Nicoya peninsula and represents unhafted the type of monolithic ax shown in *c*. We may recognize another variant of this form in the cleaver-like object exhibited in *b*.

*Goldwork*—Objects of gold are not common in the Pacific region, and when found are usually of the simpler Chiriqui forms (pl. LXXVIII, *b*). It appears that the

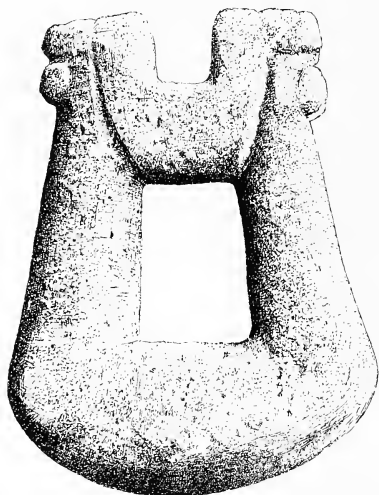
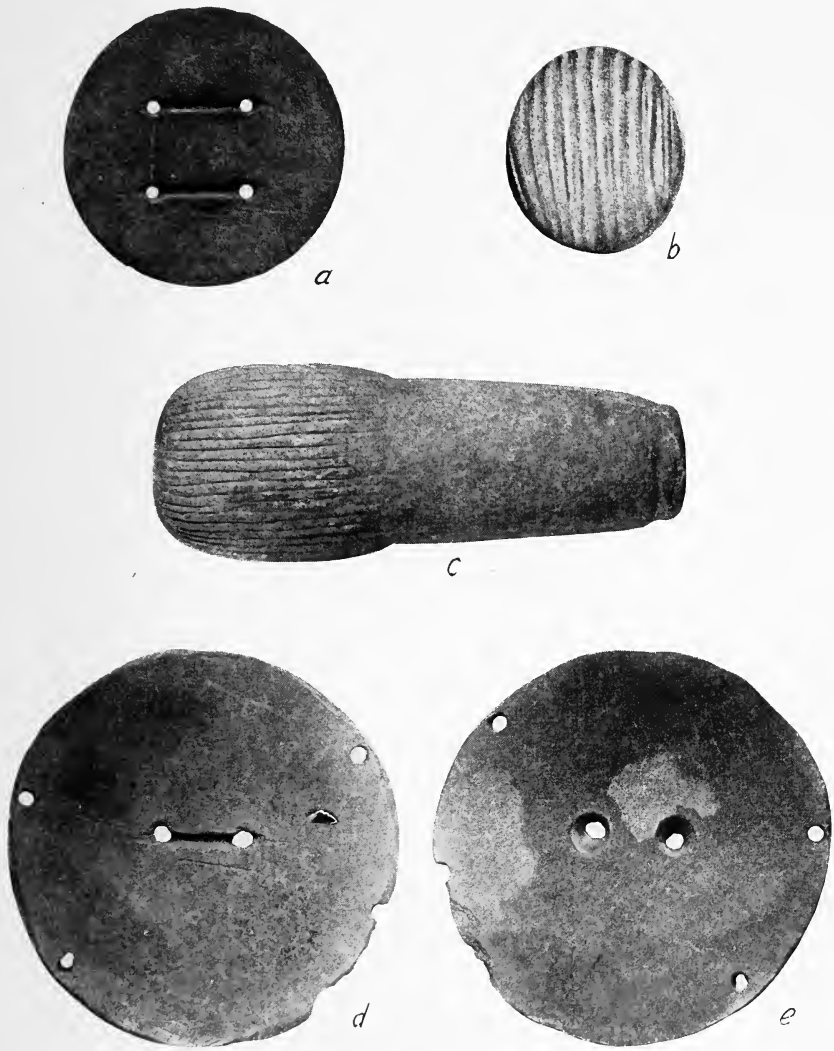


FIG. 16.—Stirrup pestle. (Courtesy of W. H. Holmes.)

decorative cravings of the inhabitants of this region were satisfied with jade ornaments rather than with gold.



DISCS AND BARK-BEATERS

*a, d, e*—DISCS, COSTA RICA. *b, c*—BARK-BEATERS, FILADELFIA, COSTA RICA





STONE AXES

*a*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA (LENGTH, 6 IN.). *b*—SAN JUAN DE NICOYA, COSTA RICA (LENGTH, 7 IN.). *c*, *e*—BLUEFIELDS, NICARAGUA (LENGTH, 10.5 IN. AND 12.5 IN.). *d*—TALAMANCA, COSTA RICA (LENGTH, 8 IN.)



## CHAPTER II

### GEOLOGICAL MAN

**T**RACES of man's existence in times so remote that they may be calculated by associated geological data have been proclaimed at various times and places in both the American continents. In Nicaragua human remains have been discovered in formations of geological significance, as follows:

- (1) Marks of human feet in tufa.
- (2) Pictographs under sandstone strata.
- (3) Stone implements in auriferous gravels associated with fossil animal bones.

In 1878 Dr. Earl Flint, at that time engaged in the collection of antiquities for the Peabody Museum of Harvard University, learned of the uncovering of human footprints in the layered tufa of a quarry near Managua. He procured samples, some of which are now in Cambridge, Washington, and Philadelphia, while others are in Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and various European museums.

The position of the footprints is shown in the accompanying vertical section of the quarry (fig. 17). The thickness of the overlying strata varies from sixteen to twenty-four feet, but the section represented is probably typical. In layer O fossil leaves were discovered immediately under the footprints, while at other places nearby Flint claims that mastodon bones were found in the same stratum. The mastodon bones in themselves cannot be accepted as proof of antiquity, as they were not found in direct association with the footprints.

The leaves, which Professor Berry of Johns Hopkins University has been kind enough to examine, are those of modern flora and are distinctly not a proof of great antiquity.

Geologists agree that the latest construction in this region is due to recently ejected volcanic material, chiefly a partially consolidated tufa, which was spread out probably in the form of semi-liquid mud, thus creating the plains of León, Managua, and Jinotepe, which are separated by escarpments—the result of recent faulting.

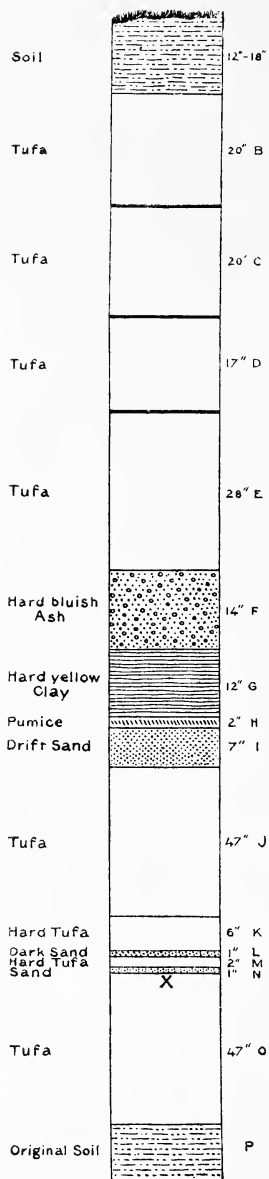


FIG. 17.—Section of quarry at Managua. (After Flint MS.)

In regard to the time necessary for the consolidation of tufa, little can be said except that no rule can be laid down. In some cases many centuries may elapse without any cementing action taking place, while elsewhere a year has been sufficient to produce a fairly hard stone. The eight layers of tufa at Managua, therefore, while forming an impressive bulk, yet in themselves present no proof of great age.

The creation of the lakes of Nicaragua by the damming of a great bay has had particular economic interest, owing to the possibility of a canal uniting the Atlantic and Pacific at this point. As a result, we are fortunate in possessing several studies of the geology of this region, from which it appears that the present volcanoes of Nicaragua became active during the Recent period. As the Managua footprints are on the lowest layer of volcanic débris, their age coincides with the beginning of volcanic activity in that region. The footprints themselves present no physical peculiarities calling for comment; they are distinctly those of modern man.

Other footprints were discovered by Flint near San Rafael, which differed from the Managua finds in that the maker wore sandals. Brinton rightly points out that this argues no great age. Similar footprints were found by Crawford near the Estero Paso Cabillo, the channel which separates Corinto from the mainland, and still others near Fonseca bay.

At the cave of San Andrés, near San Rafael, Flint found other evidence of the supposedly great antiquity of man in this region. This site consisted of an overhanging ledge in the side of a small ravine. On

the roof was a series of elaborate pictographs and simple bas-reliefs. The floor was covered by four layers of sandstone. From top to bottom their thickness was respectively five, four, four and a half, and twelve inches. These layers were separated by layers of loose sand from an inch to an inch and a half in thickness. On the surface of the sandstone were animal tracks.

Flint pointed to these animal tracks as signs of great antiquity and also remarked that the sandstone so blocked the cave that it would have been impossible to have cut the pictographs after the formation of the sandstone, which, Flint claimed, was formed after the upheaval of the region had changed the river courses and before the small stream beneath the cave had cut down to its present bed.

No intelligent discussion of the animal tracks is possible without specimens. The pictographs (pl. VIII, *c*; fig. 13, *c*), while unusually elaborate, are comparable with others in the same district.

In 1890 Mr. J. M. Crawford, the government geologist of Nicaragua, announced that, near the headwaters of Prinzapolka river, chipped and polished implements had been found in a "bed of limestone and argillaceous granite, superimposed in thin strata of clay, and on the clay is a bed of five to fifty feet thick, composed of quartz, talco slates, chlorite slates and clay slates, gravels very rich with gold."

This statement was later (1895) amplified as follows:

Stone objects, flaked and ground, have been discovered by placer miners and others prospecting for placer gold mines, mixed with auriferous gravels in the beds of creeks, also in the strata of clays, sand and gravels found several feet beneath the level of the beds of the creeks, and also in the auriferous disintegrated rock material that fills up the wide channels of rivers of a former epoch. In the placer-gold-mining districts of Principulka and Cabo Gracias a Dios have been found in the same zone with the relics of men, fossil teeth and bones of the *Elephas meridionalis* and other large pachyderms. The stone relics and fossils accompanying each other were examined by the writer, but not at the place where they were discovered.

From the data presented a few definite though not far-reaching conclusions may be drawn. In regard to the footprints in tufa, the Managua finds are clearly coeval with the beginning of volcanic activity in that region, because they occur on the lowest layer formed in that manner. This event, geologists state, took place in the Recent period. While not of great geologic age, the footprints are certainly the oldest traces of man in the area under discussion, if not in Central

America, and no remains of anywhere nearly comparable age have been found in Nicaragua or Costa Rica.

The finds in gold-bearing gravels are similar to discoveries made in several other parts of the New World. They cannot be accepted as proof of antiquity because their exact position in the ground has not been determined, for the reason that it is possible they are not so old as the stratum in which they were allegedly found, and because neolithic implements *per se* create the suspicion that they are not of very great age.

For the literature of the subject see the Bibliography under the entries Brinton, Crawford, Flint, Footprints, Hayes, McA—, Peet, and Putnam.

## CHAPTER III

### CERAMICS: NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE

#### CLASSIFICATION

THE essential unity of the esthetic products of Nicaragua and Costa Rica is proved by the ease with which they can be distinguished from the objects of the regions to the north and south—the Maya and Lenca areas, and the Chiriqui region respectively. Borrowing and blending, it is true, take place, but this is characteristic of all art.

A presentation of the ceramic remains of this region is difficult, not only because the forms and patterns are many and complicated, but especially because the haphazard manner in which many major collections have been made admits neither the segregation of local wares nor—the inevitable Mecca of the archeologist—the determination of a chronological sequence of types. A further obstacle is found in the fact that designs, technical processes, slips, and wares merge one into another in seemingly never-ending succession, so that it is often difficult to draw the dividing line between two obviously distinct conceptions.

The task of presenting a picture of the ceramic art is rendered more difficult because no single basis of classification in reasonable detail is possible. However, classification must be regarded as a means to facilitate description; a logical presentation, while very desirable, is not an end in itself. Holmes and MacCurdy, whose studies of Chiriqui pottery have been highly estimated, were unable to bring forward a unified system of types and nomenclature for the very much more simple ceramic remains of that region, and a similar difficulty would be encountered in describing the pottery of Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. However, ultimately both in this region and farther north we may look forward to a simplification of nomenclature through an understanding of the chronology.

Such names of wares as have already appeared in print have been retained unless excellent reasons for a change exist. In certain cases names have been applied to local types which do not readily cover larger groups. A good example of this is the Chiriqui Fish Ware

of MacCurdy (1911) and the Alligator Ware of Hartman (1907). Both these names apply to local groups of vessels marked by tall tripods, the designation in each case being taken from the dominant decorative motive. A study of the territory separating these groups shows them to be clearly related to each other and to other local types as well. Hence, neither "Fish Ware" nor "Alligator Ware" is descriptive of the whole group. In such instances a new name has been provided, or, as in this particular example, an older term has been revived.

In those cases where no name has yet been connected with a given ceramic type—and such is true of most of the material—it has been necessary to devise a name. Two bases have governed the choice, one descriptive and one geographic. Descriptive terms include such names as Chocolate Ware, Black-line Ware, etc. Geographic names are used to designate classes which do not lend themselves to description in a single word. Tribal names have been avoided, for, although certain forms can be associated with definite peoples, yet other tribes may also have employed similar types, and at best such names must often be based on hypothesis rather than knowledge.

On the basis outlined above, the ceramic remains of the Pacific region have been classified as follows:

Polychrome	{	Nicoya Polychrome Ware
		Under-slip Incised Ware
		Luna Ware
Intermediate	{	Managua Ware
		Nandaime Ware
		Nicoya Black-line Ware
Monochrome	{	Chocolate Ware
		Black Ware
		Orange-Brown Ware
		Red Ware
		Palmar Ware
		Modeled Alligator Ware
		Zapatero Ware

### NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE

Under the designation Nicoya Polychrome Ware has been included the great bulk of the painted pottery from the region between Ometepe island in Lake Nicaragua and the Gulf of Nicoya. The shapes, designs, clays, slips, colors, etc., of this group, while showing local

variations, indeed, exhibit such unity that it is impossible to treat this ware, in our present state of knowledge, except as a single group.

In the Nicaraguan Lake region, Nicoya Polychrome Ware comes in contact with Luna Ware, with which it blends, and also with Nandaime and Managua Wares. South and east of the Gulf of Nicoya interrelation and blending occur with the art of Chiriqui and the Costa Rican Highlands.

#### LOCAL SUB-WARES

The exact determination of local styles of Nicoya Polychrome Ware is impossible without intensive field work. Differences in "feeling" often do not lend themselves to verbal description. From the data in hand the following subtypes are worthy of notice:

I. *Santa Helena Ware*—The pottery obtained by Bransford (1881) from the site of this name on Ometepe island has been called Santa Helena Ware. It is marked primarily by the brilliance and firmness of the painted designs (pl. LXXII, *a*), and by the greater prevalence of certain motives on certain shapes, such as the Feathered Serpent, type C, on bowls. The presence of tall tripod bowls (fig. 84) is characteristic, and also encircling yellow bands covered with red dots (pl. XXXI).

II. *Tola Ware*—The collection made by Flint, now in the Peabody Museum, contains bowls which are typical of the site. They are distinguished by simple patterns and especially by an underbody colored solid red or having heavy red stripes radiating from the center of the base. Examples of these two types are given in figs. 83, *b*, and 29, *b*.

III. *Culebra Ware*—Culebra Ware is distinguished by a beautiful cream or white slip which resembles a thin layer of plaster, such as must have been used by the Central Americans in preparing the leaves of their manuscripts. The rim is marked by one, more rarely two, slight depressions which encircle the vessel just below the lip. This characteristic is sometimes scarcely perceptible, but is always present. The usual shapes are jars with flaring ring bases (pl. XXXVIII, *a*), and deep bowls with everted lips and flaring ring bases (pl. XXXV, *a*). Shallow bowls with similiar designs are found, but they lack the depression below the rim, and their geographical distribution is uncertain. Only three zoöomorphic patterns appear on

Culebra Ware: the Man-and-Jaguar (pl. xxxii, *a*), Jaguar (see pl. xxxv), and the profile Human Face (see pl. xxxiii, *b*). These designs, however, are not confined exclusively to this ware. Characteristic geometric patterns are seen in pl. xxxv, *a*, both on the base and on the panel at the extreme left. The red bands on the underbody of pl. xxxv, *b*, are also characteristic of this ware.

IV. *Filadelfa Ware*—The greater portion of painted vessels from Nicoya gathered by the writer, now in the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, came from this large site on the Rio Tempisque. The ware is characterized primarily by the light-yellow tone of the slip (pl. xxii, *a*), and also by globular vessels with modeled faces on the side, the necks of which are encircled by guilloches (pl. xxiii).

V. *Bolson Ware*—The pottery from the mouth of the Tempisque enters largely into the Anderson collection in San José. There seems to be a distinct local flavor to these pieces. Typical specimens have a light-colored, thick slip. Egg-shape jars with tripod legs open at the base, of which a fine example is shown in pl. xiv, are common.

While the determination of local types is always of interest and a final classification must be based largely on them, the groups here outlined are too vague to form a basis for extended discussion of the ceramic remains. Furthermore, it rarely occurs that patterns are confined to a single one of these groups, the definition of the local wares depending on characteristic combinations of designs, shapes, and slips. Hence the discussion to follow is based on the decoration of the vessel rather than on these imperfectly defined local types. A primary division into modeled and painted motives is based on the technic employed, and these groups again are subdivided into smaller units.

#### SHAPES

An intelligent discussion of pottery shapes is rendered more difficult by lack of definitive nomenclature. Every individual has his personal mental picture of the shape implied by such words as cup, vase, jar, etc., while dictionaries and encyclopedias do not discuss the forms suggested by these terms. Furthermore, specialized uses of general terms have arisen in local fields, often rendering the problem more complicated.

The following terms have been worked out by Dr. A. V. Kidder and the writer in an attempt to crystallize the general words in common use. While the value of such definitions depends on the extent of their acceptance, they at least form a standard which has been adhered to in this work.

VESSEL: An object for holding liquids.

PLATE: A broad open vessel, whose height is less than one quarter its diameter.

BOWL: A vessel with unrestricted orifice, whose diameter is greater than its height.

JAR: A vessel with restricted orifice, whose height and width are approximately equal, and whose greatest diameter lies at approximately half its height.

VASE: A vessel whose height is obviously greater than its width.

DISH: A large open vessel, used primarily for eating.

POT: A vessel more deep than broad, used primarily for cooking.

CUP: A small hemispherical vessel, used primarily for drinking.

BOTTLE: A vessel with a narrow cylindrical neck.

PITCHER: A vase with a single handle.













LADLE: A plate or bowl with a single elongated handle.

The last four terms are specialized classes which might be included under the general definitions above. However, their use is so common and the picture called to the mind so concrete that they are valuable. Dish and pot are not of great use unless their function, as well as their shape, is taken into account. Dish is especially useful in describing vessels of irregular shapes. Plate, bowl, jar, and vase are the terms in most general use which can be defined with some accuracy. Names such as beaker and olla are specific in certain archeological areas, but have not been generally adopted.

The definitions above apply to the bodies of vessels. Such fundamental shapes may in turn be modified by the addition of rims and bases. Thus a globular jar may have a flaring rim added to it and may rest upon an annular base. These qualifying terms, however, are self-explanatory and call for no detailed discussion.

The definition of an effigy vessel also deserves a word of comment. In a strict sense this class of vessel is a model of some larger form—usually animal or vegetal—with an opening to admit liquids. In view of the large numbers of certain pottery types in this region, such a definition is unsatisfactory, and the term has been made to cover all vessels in which the entire surface is conceived of as an animal or vegetal form without regard to the extent of the modification of shape.

With these definitions in mind we may now classify the shapes of Nicoya Polychrome Ware in accordance with the accompanying scheme.

VESSEL		SHAPES	MODIFICATIONS
JARS :		globular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tripod legs</li> <li>ring base</li> <li>modified stands</li> </ul>
		egg-shape	
		re-curved (pear-shape)	
		cylindrical	
BOWLS :		straight-sided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tripod legs</li> <li>ring base</li> </ul>
		incurved rim	
		re-curved rim	
		flaring rim	
PLATES :		flat base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tripod</li> <li>ring base</li> </ul>
		round base	
CUPS :		globular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>tripod legs</li> <li>ring base</li> </ul>
		flaring	

The jars highly characteristic of the region are egg-shape or re-curved, with flaring ring bases or "modified stands". An example of the former is shown in pl. xvii, *a*. The second type deserves a word of explanation. Vessels of considerable height with a round base will not stand erect. They may be supported by stakes and stones, as is done by the Indians of Talamanca today, or the form of the vessel may be modified by such additions as tripod legs or a ring base,

or a special stand may be made of wood, stone, or clay. In the Highland region stands of stone and clay are not uncommon and are of fixed types (pl. CLXXXVII). In the Pacific region separate stands very rarely are found, but similar forms were luted to the base of round-bottom vessels—in theory. In practice, however, a flaring ring base was added, above which a ribbon of clay was applied in such fashion as to represent the upper rim of the pottery stand.

The form evolved by this process is shown in pl. XVI, *b*. It will be observed that the outline of the vessel is obscured, but not broken by the encircling band of clay. Further modification is shown in fig. 87, *a*, in which the ribbon of clay has been placed about the shoulder of the vessel. The evolution of this band, in the last example purely decorative, from a functional form illustrates a constant and well-known tendency in the development of decorative motives. A clearer picture than it is possible to give would doubtless show that nearly all the forms of the ceramic remains of this region originated in utilitarian objects such as gourds and other natural receptacles of the country.

The typical bowl has flaring sides and is supported by three legs shaped like animal heads. The legs are hollow and contain clay balls which rattle when the vessel is shaken. This form occurs as far north as Mexico, but is especially characteristic of this region. Plates are rare; they have either flat bases with flaring rims, or else have slightly curved bases and no modification of the rim. Cups are not uncommon; they are either globular or else have flaring walls, and often stand on ring bases (fig. 30).

Few shapes have intruded from other areas, unless it be conceded that the Nicoya Polychrome effigy jars developed from the very similar forms of the Plumbate Ware of Salvador and Guatemala, which is known to have been manufactured at least as early as the sixth century A.D. The Maya cylindrical tripod jar, however, is found with painted designs typical of Nicoya (pl. XL), and indeed it penetrates as far south as the Province of Chiriqui. Fig. 94 shows a vessel from Nicaragua with cylindrical tripod legs, a form highly characteristic of Mayan ceramics, but rare in this region. From the south it appears that practically nothing in the way of shapes has been adopted in Nicoya Polychrome Ware.

Aberrant shapes are very rare. Fig. 61 shows a square bowl set on a round base. On the whole, however, the potter exhibited little

desire to demonstrate control of the clay by playing with her (or his) technic.

#### CLAYS AND FIRING

Intelligent discussion of clays is scarcely possible without an understanding of the local centers of manufacture and clay pits. Considerable variation in thickness and weight may be observed, but its regional significance can be determined only with more exact data. Sand and (more rarely) pounded shell were mixed with the clay to give greater strength.

Firing was not carried to a very high temperature, and consequently, as in the pottery of most semicivilized peoples, fragments show that the outer surface is much darker and better fired than the interior. Overfired pieces occur occasionally, and are marked by the blue-gray tinge of the slip and the partial obliteration of the painted design.

#### SHAPING

The only historical notice concerning the manufacture of pottery is found in the *Geografía* of López de Velasco (p. 329), who writes that the pottery on the island of Chirra was made "in great quantity, not with wheels but built up in layers, smoothed over the hand with the bones of fishes." From this brief description we judge that the common coiling method of fabrication was in use. An examination of sherds shows that both spiral coils and concentric rings were used to build up the walls of the vessel. Smoothing the walls is of course necessary except in the very crudest types of pottery. The use of fish-bones for this purpose is, however, unusual, and the discovery of small stones evidently thus used leads to the belief that pebbles rather than fish-bones were normally employed for this function.

#### SLIPS

A slip or barbotine is a thin layer of clay used to furnish the outer surface of a pottery vessel with a smooth coat. It is applied in a semi-liquid state, and differs from most washes and paints in that it has distinct body and may be peeled off with a knife.

The slip of the Nicoya Polychrome Ware varies in color from almost dead white, through cream, to yellow-brown. The usual consistency is not unlike that of several coats of oil paint. In some localities, such as that of Panamá bay (Costa Rica), it closely re-

sembles plaster and flakes off very readily. At Filadelfia (Costa Rica) the slip has a characteristic yellow tinge which makes the pottery from that vicinity easily recognizable.

#### COLORS

The usual colors employed are black, red, and orange. The black is used for outlines, and the red and orange ordinarily for filling. Red rarely, with a filling of lighter red or orange, was employed for outlines. The source of these colors is not known. However, in the Peninsula of Nicoya manganese probably entered into the black paint, resulting in a characteristic luster.

Other colors more rarely used are brown, gray, purple, and blue. Brown, either mixed with black or by itself, was employed for outlines and also as a filler. Gray is very rare: it appears as an outline on pl. xxiv, and is elsewhere used as a filler. Purple was obtained from shell-fish and used to dye cloth (page 39), and that found on the pottery may have been similarly obtained. Blue dye was procured in Salvador from logwood, and it may have been manufactured in Nicoya or have passed in trade. It is rarely found, and usually only on the Under-slip Incised Ware (see pages 191-192).

#### VARNISHES

After the vessel was fired, it was coated with a layer of varnish composed of wax or some vegetal material such as resin or copal. Indian pottery of the present day among the Pima in Arizona and Sonora and the Conibo in Peru is similarly treated, and it is probable that the bulk of the pottery of Central America received a similar finish in order to enhance the brilliance of the colors and to preserve them.

The Nicoya pottery, when first disclosed by excavation, often shows the presence of this varnish, but it usually disappears on exposure to the air. Any attempt to clean the vessel before it is completely dry invariably results in the destruction of the luster and often of the paint as well. Fig. 75 shows an excellent example of the original finish, and others may be observed among the pieces illustrated.

#### DECORATION

The Nicoya Polychrome Ware is decorated by the addition of modeled details, which in turn are painted, and also by painted pat-

terns. The modeled decoration consists usually of heads in the round applied to the side of the vessel, and arms, legs, tails, etc., seen in bas-relief. The result of these additions is an effigy jar, a type discussed later in detail. Another field for modeling is the bowl leg. Animal and more rarely human heads are common, and Atlantean figures occur occasionally.

Painted decoration is employed as an aid to modeled details and also by itself. For the latter use the vessel is divided into panels within which appear painted patterns. In bowls, zones encircle the inner and outer rims, while the bottom is also a field for decoration. In jars and vases, the top and bottom are usually decorated. In the finest pieces of this shape, the top and bottom are covered with geometric patterns and the center of the vessel is adorned with figures rendered with an attempt at realism (see pl. xxvi, *d*).

## CHAPTER IV

### NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MODELED FORMS

ONE of the most characteristic forms of the Nicoya Polychrome Ware is the effigy jar, in which the body of the vessel is utilized to represent a body or a head, and details are added in relief to complete the conception. Two types are particularly common. In one an animal head, modeled in the round, is attached to the side of the vessel; sometimes legs and tails are added in relief, and the whole is embellished with painted details. The second group treats the body of the vessel as a human head, and eyes, nose, mouth, ears, etc., are applied in relief. Both of these types have a wide distribution. Jars with projecting animal heads are found in the pottery of Pueblo Bonito, the Tularosa river, and elsewhere in New Mexico, and their range extends southward to Peru. Vessels, especially bowls, representing human heads, occur in the middle Mississippi valley and thence southward to Bolivia and Peru. In other words, these types cover almost the entire American pottery-making area. Local forms and variants can be distinguished, of course, so that we may look forward to the ultimate working out of the interrelation of New World culture through these and similarly widely spread types, when local chronological sequences have been determined.



FIG. 18.—The turkey head used as a handle; Tepic, Mexico.

More especially, the Nicoya Polychrome effigy vessels appear to be related to the Plumbate or Glazed Ware (pl. xx), which probably centers in Salvador or Guatemala. This class of pottery is distinguished primarily by the slight suffusion, apparently accidental, which has produced a semi-vitrified surface, an action due perhaps to the presence of

lead in the clay. While the majority of known pieces have come from Salvador and Guatemala, this ware passed far and wide in trade. Examples have been brought to light at Tepic in western Mexico (fig. 18), at Teotihuacan and Chichen Itza, on the shores of Lake Nicaragua (fig. 280), and even in the distant Province of Chiriqui in the Republic of Panama. Most important, however, is the discovery of vessels of this ware in tomb 10 at the ruins of Copan, which establishes the fact that they were objects of trade as early as the fifth or sixth century A.D.

The vitrified surface of the Plumbate Ware did not lend itself to painted decoration, hence incised and modeled embellishments are found, and the animal effigy jar is typical. The effigy types are particularly close to those of Nicoya Polychrome Ware, so much so, indeed, that direct interrelation, the exact extent of which can probably be determined with further knowledge of the chronology, must by hypothesized.

#### I. ANIMAL EFFIGY VESSELS

The animal effigy jar, as we have said, is a form highly characteristic of Nicoya Polychrome Ware. The animals represented are birds and mammals; the absence of the alligator and the serpent, which elsewhere are dominant motives, is worthy of note. It is also noteworthy that sufficient realism is exhibited to make possible the identification of the majority of the types portrayed, and subclassification is based on the various animal forms.

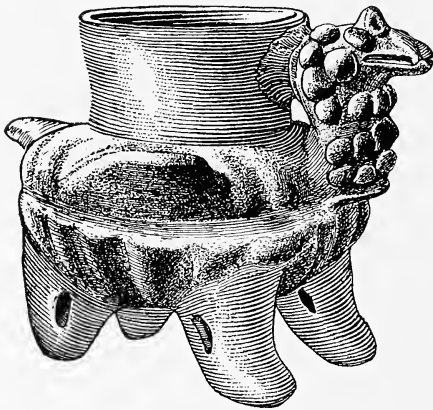
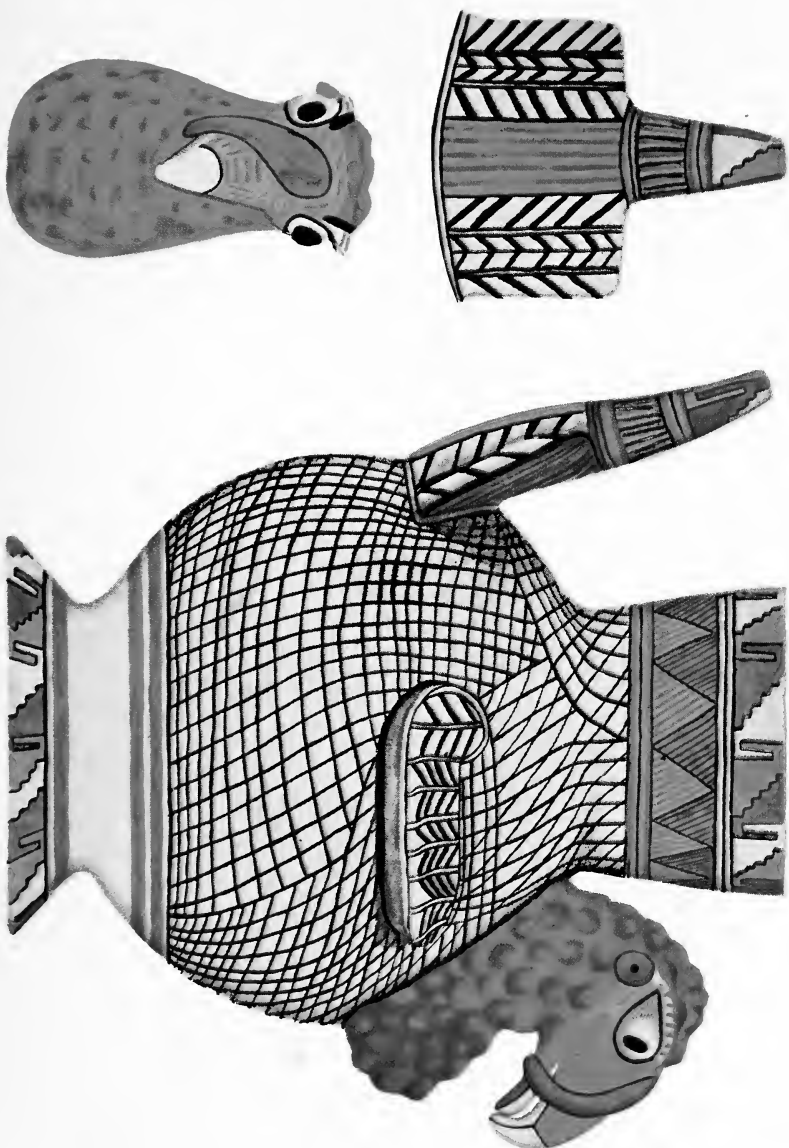


FIG. 19. — Turkey effigy jar, Colima, Mexico.

A. *The Turkey*—Pl. XIII shows an elaborate example of the turkey (*Meleagris Mexicana*). The head and neck are rendered with such realism that the exact species can be identified. The body, wings, and tail are completely covered by a conventionalized feather pattern, and the legs are eliminated. The tail forms a spout, so



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: TURKEY EFFIGY JAR, BOLSON, COSTA RICA

HEIGHT, 9.5 IN





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MACAW EFFIGY JAR. BOLSON, COSTA RICA  
(HEIGHT, 11.5 IN.)



that the vessel is related to the group of Maya pottery usually known as chocolate pots. A less pretentious example of the same motive appears in pl. xv, *d*. The treatment of the head and neck is essentially similar to that of pl. xiii, but the tail is very much reduced and the wings are not in relief. An addition, however, is seen in the legs which are painted on the front of the vessel.

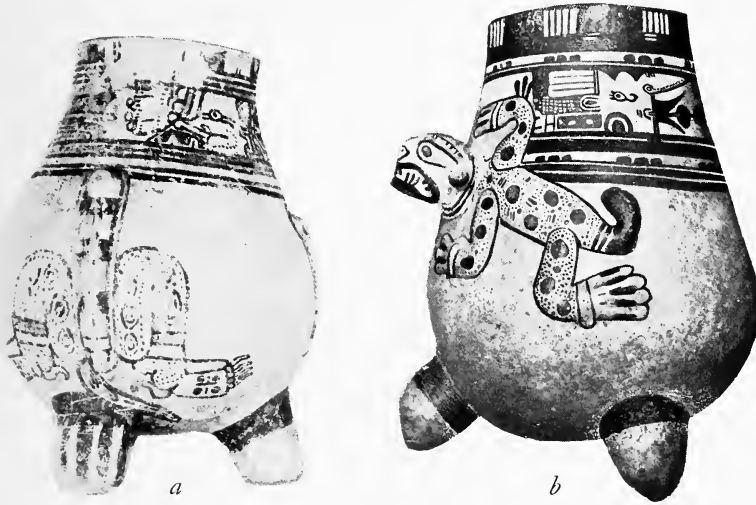


FIG. 20.—Nicoya Polychrome Ware. *a*, Tola, Nicaragua (height, 7 in.); *b*, Nicoya, Costa Rica (height, 10 in.).

Pl. xv, *c*, shows another variation, in which the neck has become a handle and the raised lumps seen before are replaced by painted circles. The wing is represented by what we may call the checker-board pattern (which appears more clearly in pl. xiv), and has the addition of a rosette similar to those seen with the Human Figure motive (fig. 39), and also a highly conventionalized head, which constantly appears in the pottery of this region as a space filler.

The turkey head and neck marked by raised dots, especially in the form of a handle, is frequently found in the pottery of Mexico and shows unbroken distribution as far south as Costa Rica. Two examples (figs. 18, 19) from the Mexican region are shown, a Plumbate Ware specimen from the Ulua valley (pl. xx, *b*), and a Polychrome vessel from the same region (pl. xv, *e*).

B. *The Macaw*.—One of the finest pieces of pottery from Costa Rica represents the macaw (pl. xiv). To those familiar with the

appearance of this bird the realism of the head will be apparent, for the artist has rendered most faithfully the characteristically vicious eyes and beak. The wings are shown by broad painted bands on which appear a checkerboard pattern, and the legs are roughly indicated in painted relief. The neck of the vessel is encircled by a delicately painted panel containing two conventionalized feathered serpents.



FIG. 21.—Effigy vessels. *a*, Costa Rica; *b*, Filadelfia, Costa Rica; *c*, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica (diameter, 5.5 in.).

Macaw heads on the sides of vessels are rare in this area. They are known in Mexico as far north as Casas Grandes, and they are found also in the ceramic remains of Peru.

*C. Other Birds*—Two unidentified birds are shown in pl. xvi. As in the last example, the necks of these jars are decorated with serpent motives and the wings are indicated by both relief and painting. Another bird, perhaps a duck, devised as a pottery drum, appears in fig. 169, *b*.

*D. The Jaguar*—This animal appears in several types of effigy vessels. One of these consists of tall jars with a modeled head projecting from the side (pl. xvii, *b*). In addition to the head, further details are added in low relief, in painted outline, or sometimes in both, as is seen

in fig. 20, *a*, where the tail is represented twice. An example of similar duplication of parts appears in pl. xix, *a*.

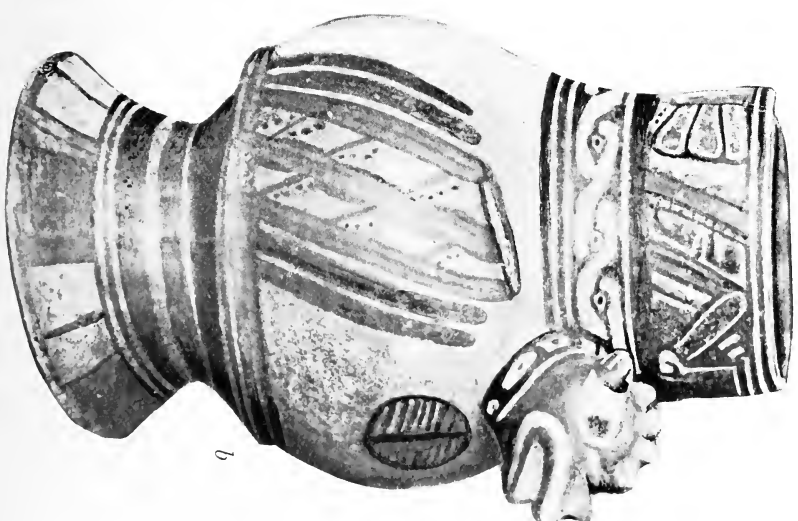
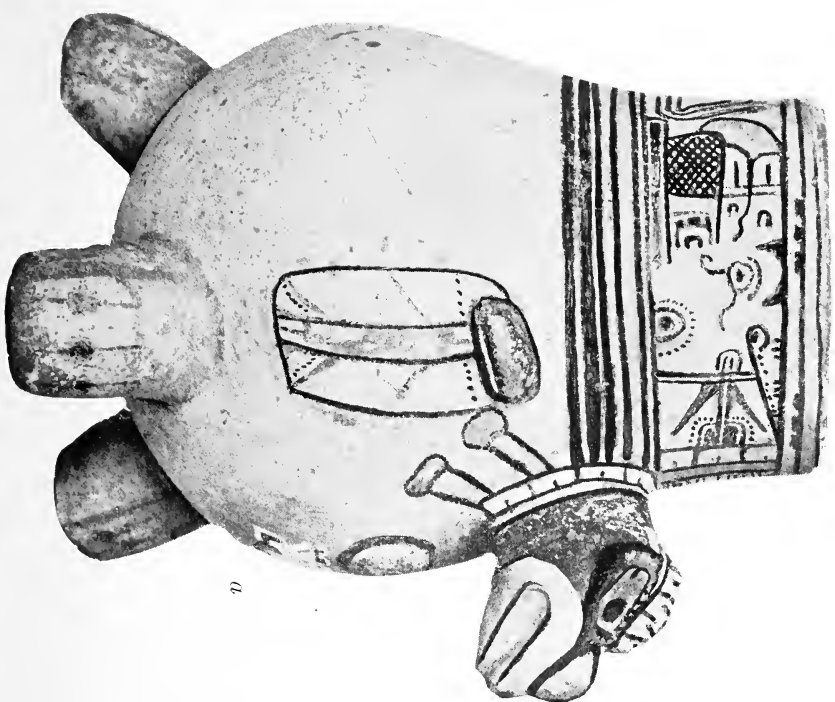
In fig. 20, *b*, we illustrate a most unusual portrayal of the jaguar.



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE

*a, c*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA (HEIGHT, 7 IN. AND 4 IN.). *b*—COSTA RICAN HIGHLANDS (HEIGHT, 9 IN.). *d*—SANTA BARBARA, NICOYA, COSTA RICA (HEIGHT, 10 IN.). *e*—ULUA VALLEY, HONDURAS (HEIGHT, 10.5 IN.)





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: BIRD EFFIGY JARS  
*a*—NICARAGUA (HEIGHT, 7.5 IN.). *b*—BOLSON, COSTA RICA





*a*



*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE

*a*—SANTA BARBARA, COSTA RICA (HEIGHT, 12 IN.). *b*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA (HEIGHT, 10.5 IN.)



The head is modeled as on the effigy vessels, but is shown attached to a complete body modeled in low relief. A somewhat similar conception is given in fig. 98, *b*, on a Luna Ware vessel, and Tello (1922, fig. 1, *b*) has illustrated a vessel from the Chicama region in Peru, on which the jaguar has been rendered almost exactly in the manner of our fig. 20, *a*.

An unusually fine example of jaguar effigy appears in pl. XLIII. The painted decoration on the arms, legs, and neck consists for the greater part of conventionalized jaguar heads, while the neck of the vessel is encircled by a very much conventionalized variant of the Plumed Serpent motive.

Another type of jaguar effigy is shown in fig. 21, *a*. This class of vessels has either three or four legs, is usually rather small, and often is rectangular like the example illustrated, which may be compared with the metates of the Highland region (fig. 181). It is by no means rare in the Nicoya peninsula, and is found again in a slightly modified form in the Highland area (pl. CXLIII). The exterior painted patterns, discussed later (fig. 190), are conventionalized derivatives of the Chiriqui Alligator motive.

A third class of jaguar effigy vessels is illustrated in fig. 21, *c*. It will be observed that this specimen represents a complete jaguar, on the back of which is a bowl. The jaguar is ornamented with markings derived from the alligator, a pattern usually associated with the Highland jaguar effigy bowls. The bowl itself is also decorated, in this example, with a design of Highland origin. A curious feature is the treatment of the hind-legs and tail, which have been so arranged as to form a mouth, above which a second face is painted. This conception is unusual. More commonly the rear end is supported by a pair of legs similar to the front legs. The body of the animal is



FIG. 22.—Armadillo effigy vessel, Ulua valley, Honduras. (Height, 5 in.)

filled with clay balls which rattle when the vessel is shaken, and the neck is equipped in a similar manner.

E. *The Monkey*—The animal represented in pl. xvii, *a*, can be identified as a monkey because of the long curving tail, which, in the illustration, may be seen along the junction between the modeling and the body of the vase. Pl. xv, *a*, *b*, exhibit the same animal, minus the tail, but with the characteristic facial type. In *a* the ever-present tendency to fuse and compound decorative motives is well exemplified, for the arms of the monkey are covered by a pattern representing feathers (figs. 35, 188), while the walls of the vessel are grooved in the manner of squash effigy vessels (fig. 131). This curious combination—monkey, bird, and squash—is one of many similar compound forms to be discussed. In it we are confronting the symbolism

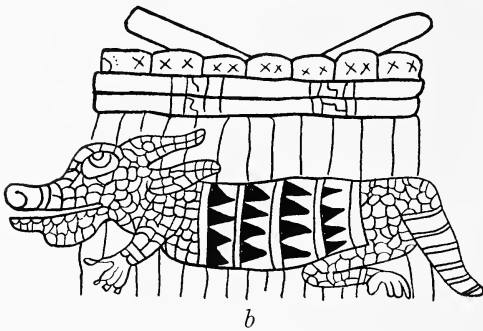
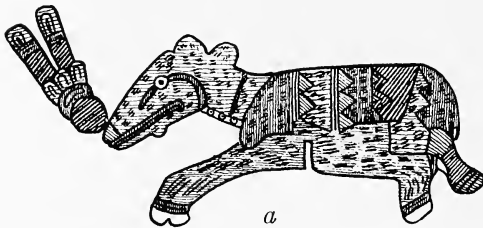


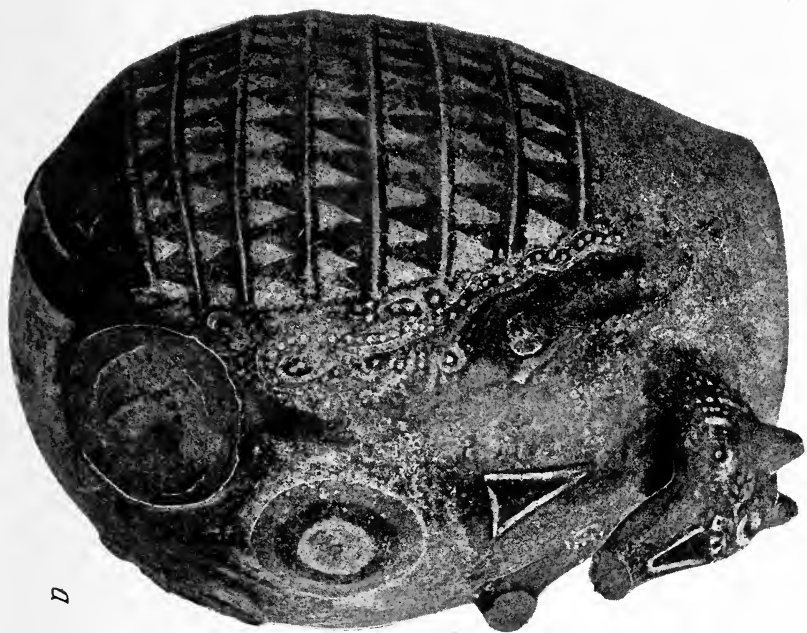
FIG. 23.—The armadillo as seen (*a*) on the frescoes at Santa Rita (after Gann), and (*b*) in the Codex Tro-Cortesianus.

of a complex and unknown mythology, yet a type of symbolism prevalent throughout the world, of which the representations most familiar to us are perhaps the unicorn and the sphinx.

A different manner of depicting the monkey partly in relief is illustrated in pl. lxix and discussed below.

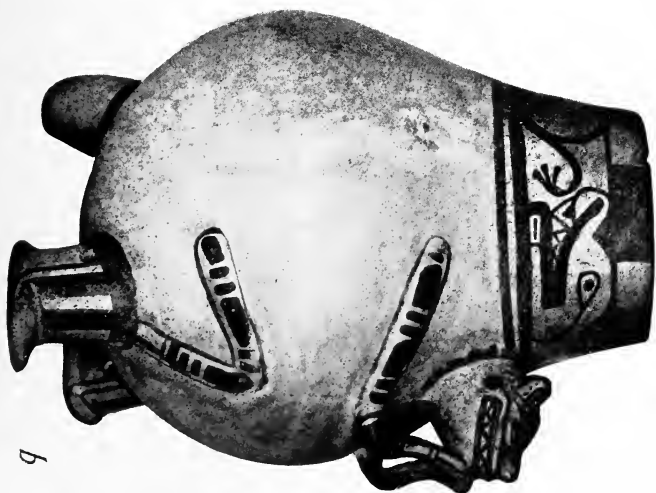
F. *The Armadillo*—This animal, which is of common occurrence on the effigy jars of this region, can be identified with considerable certainty owing to the characteristic body markings. In general, two main subdivisions are to be noted,

one consisting of large jars and the other of smaller vessels with an annular base. The former is found strictly in the region of the



*a*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE, NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA  
(HEIGHT OF *b*, 11.5 IN.)



*b*



Pacific coast, while the latter type occurs in the Nicoya peninsula, whence it extends to the Cartago valley.

Two species of the armadillo are found in Central America, the *Tatu novemcinctum*, or nine-banded variety, and the *Cabassous centralis*. The former is by far the more common, and Tozzer and Allen consider it the species portrayed by the Maya, while MacCurdy believes that it is represented in the large group of modeled Chiriqui pottery which has been called Biscuit or Armadillo Ware. This Chiriqui group, however, is not related to the Nicaragua-Costa Rica type, for the armadillo is there divided into conventionalized units which are applied in relief and it rarely appears as a zoömorphie unit as in the Pacific area.

The large armadillo effigies are most naturally rendered in the form shown in pl. XVIII, *a*. The scale pattern is here faithfully reproduced in paint and the bands have been raised in slight relief. The fore-paws, which are broken off, were doubtless attached to the nose, as is seen in pl. XIX, *a*. Pl. XVIII, *b*, shows a similar conception, but with the markings of the carapace omitted. Pl. XIX, *a*, introduces a new pose, probably borrowed from the Atlantic coast, where it is of more common occurrence (pl. CLIX, *c*). An interesting feature



FIG. 24.—Armadillo cup, Costa Rica. (Diameter, 6.5 in.)

is the attempt to show the front legs both in painted outline and in the round. Pl. XIX, *c*, shows the transference of this motive to stone, resulting in a stalagmite vase of extreme thinness, which in form resembles the more beautiful vessels from the Island of Sacrificios (Vera Cruz), and in material is related to the marble jars of the Ulua valley.

An unusual type of armadillo effigy is represented in pl. XIX, *b*. While realism is shown in the head and legs, the carapace is not so

naturalistic as in other examples. The use of four-legged vessels, even in effigy jars, is rare in this region, although it is common in Salvador, the northeastern part of Guatemala, and in British Honduras. The slight depression below the rim is characteristic of the pottery from the Gulf of Culebra, Costa Rica.

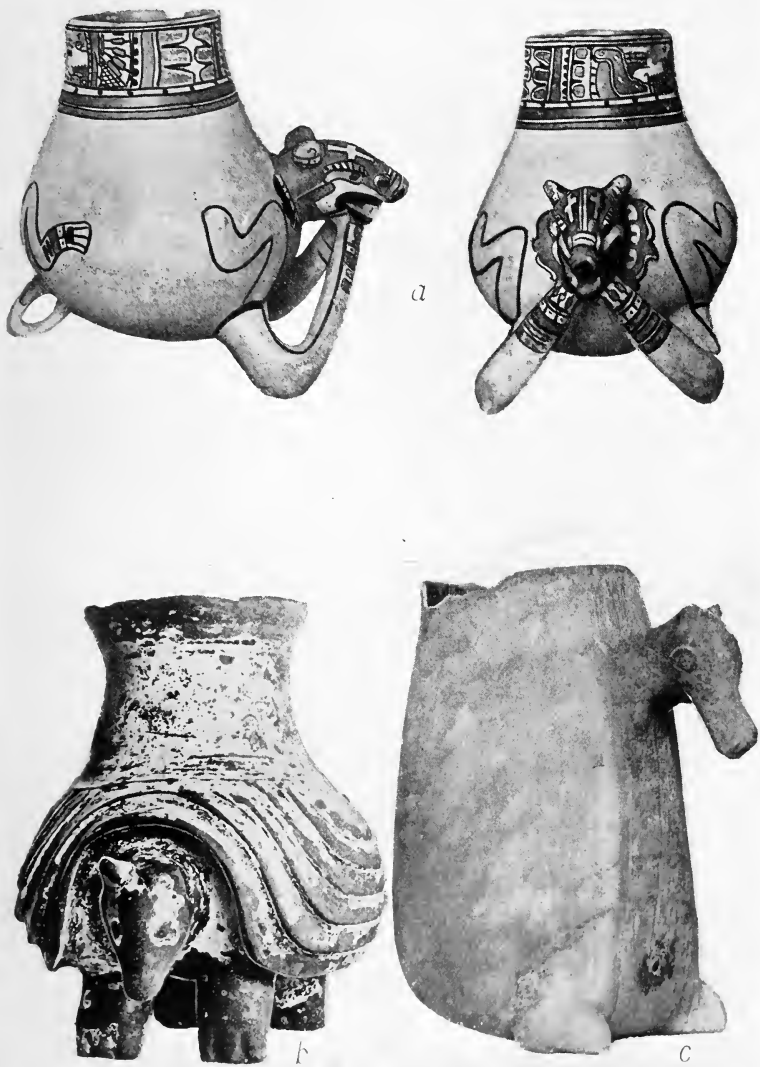
Fig. 22 shows an effigy jar, evidently representing the armadillo, from the Ulua valley. Similar pieces, marked by the same narrow neck and treatment of the arms and body, have been found in Salvador. Pl. xx, *a*, is another armadillo from the Ulua valley, of



FIG. 25.—Armadillo cup, Costa Rica.

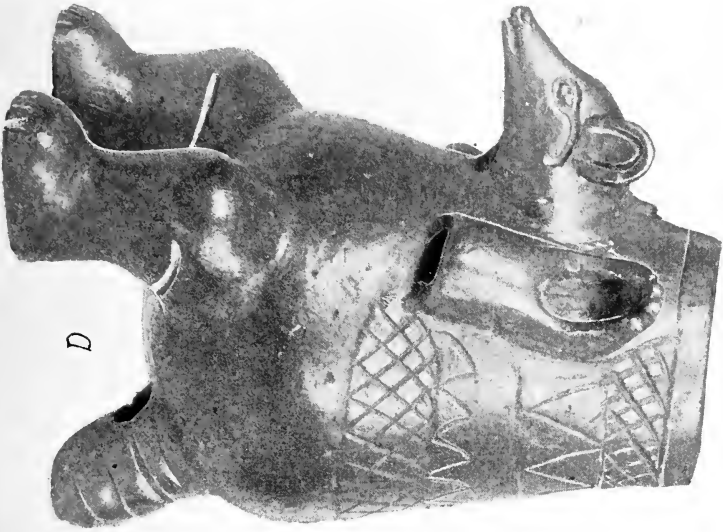
Plumbate Ware. The V-shape markings are clearly rendered, and the front and rear portions are indicated by cross-hatching, a method which appears in Costa Rica on the second type of armadillo effigy. Fig. 23, *a*, shows an armadillo from the frescoes at Santa Rita, British Honduras, and *b* the same animal as portrayed in the Codex Tro-Cortesianus.

The second type of armadillo effigy vessel forms a more clear-cut group than that just discussed, and but little variation occurs.



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE AND STALAGMITE JAR: ARMADILLO EFFIGIES.  
NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA









NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

HEIGHT, 10 IN.



Two examples are shown in figs. 24 and 25, which differ only in the arrangement of the bands. Two heads are invariably present, flanking which are cross-hatched panels representing the terminal portions of the carapace. The banded portion of the body has been turned so that the long axis connects the hatched portions. The expanding base of these vessels is hollow and contains pellets which rattle.

G. *Unidentified Animals*—Many animal forms appear which cannot be identified with certainty. An example of this class is shown in pl. XXI. This piece also illustrates the inartistic shape so common in Nicoya in combination with colors and designs often of real beauty. Many ves-



FIG. 26.—Effigy vase, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica. (Height, 11.5 in.)



FIG. 27.—Effigy vase, Las Mercedes, Costa Rica. (Height, 8.75 in.)

sels are esthetically more attractive when inverted.

#### HUMAN EFFIGY VESSELS

Effigy jars representing the human head have a distribution in the New World almost as wide as pottery-making itself. In some regions these vessels evidently are attempts at portraiture, and in certain localities, such as Peru, the portraits are of high artistic merit; but in the Pacific area realism

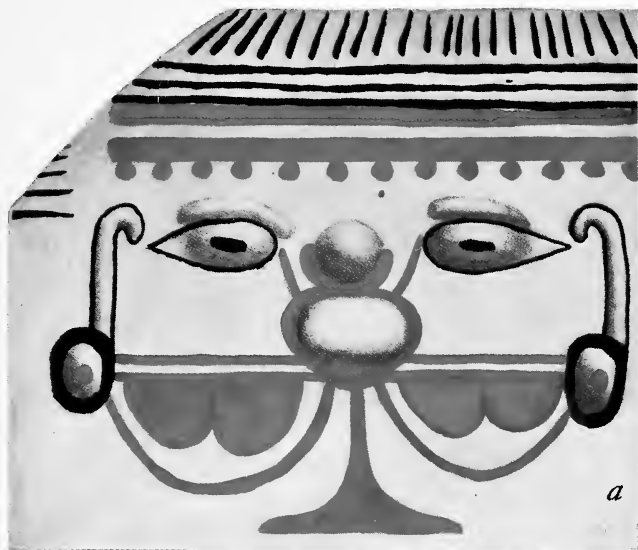


FIG. 28.—Nicoya Polychrome Ware, Santa Helena, Nicaragua.  
(Height, 6 in. and 4 in.)

never rose to such heights, and modeling remained subordinate to symbolic painted detail. It is perhaps worthy of note that effigy vessels representing complete human figures are markedly absent from this region, while figurines are common; it is only the head



FIG. 29.—Nicoya Polychrome Ware. *a*, Nicoya, Costa Rica (diameter, 4 in.);  
*b*, Tola, Nicaragua (diameter, 4.5 in.)



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

HEIGHT OF *b*, 6 IN.





FIG. 30.—Effigy cups. *a*, San Antonio de Nicoya, Costa Rica; *b*, *c*, Costa Rica; *d*, Orosi, Costa Rica. (Diameters, 4.5 in. to 5.5 in.)

that is exhibited as a complete vessel. In considering this form we shall recognize several types distinguished by stylistic variation and divergence in geographical distribution.

*Type A*—The range of variations of head effigy jars and vases is shown in pls. XXII-XXV and figs. 26-27. The faces are characteristically indicated by small raised portions representing the mouth, nose, eyes, eyelids, ears, and earplugs, which are further empha-

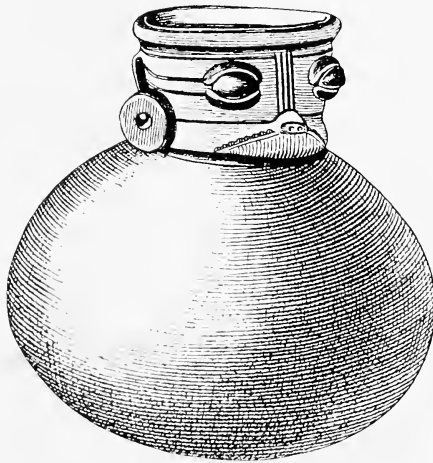


FIG. 31.—Effigy jar, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica. (Diameter, 6 in.)

sized by the application of paint. In one case (fig. 26) the cheeks are raised in slight relief. The elaborate patterns painted about the mouth probably represent the facial tattooing or painting with which the natives were accustomed to adorn themselves (see page 38). The two common forms of decoration of the chin, one wedge-shape and the other like an inverted T, are shown in pl. XXII, *a*, *b*.

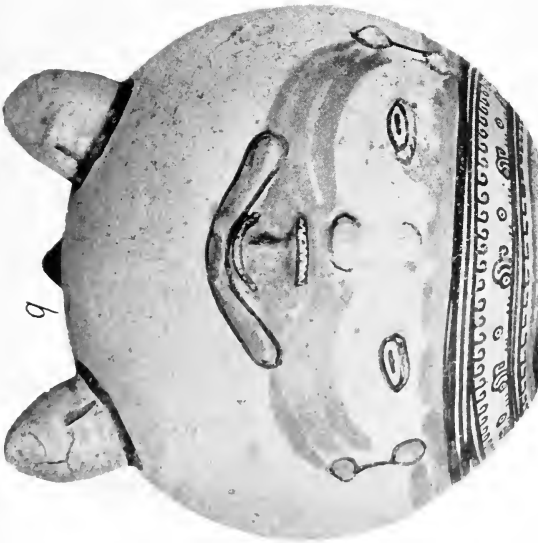
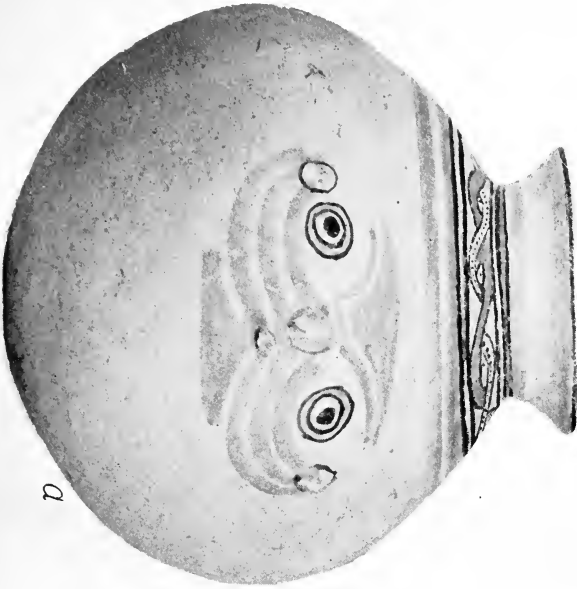
Pl. XXIV calls for special comment. In the first place, the method of showing the arms and the elaborate necklace are not characteristic of this region, but are more commonly found on pottery from Salvador and the Ulua valley (see fig. 22). Secondly, the colors



FIG. 32.—Nicoya Polychrome Ware, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica.  
(Diameter, 8 in.)

employed are most unusual. While gray is used sparingly to fill the spaces outlined in brown or black, this is the only instance I know in which it is employed for the outlines. Blue also is exceedingly rare, and is found usually in combination with the technic of incising before the application of the slip. In Salvador blue paint was obtained from logwood, and a similar process doubtless was used in this region, although the pigment may have been imported.

Fig. 27 shows a delicately painted though somewhat battered



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE. PHILADELPHIA, COSTA RICA  
(HEIGHT OF a, 9 IN.)



example from the Atlantic coast of Costa Rica. The eyes are represented by a depression around which are concentric circles that were incised before the application of the slip, thus tying in this ware on technical grounds with the Under-slip Incised Ware.

Pls. xxii, *a*, and xxiii, *a, b*, both from Filadelfia, and pl. xxviii, *i*, show a thin-line treatment of the subject technically allied to Luna Ware, to which many pieces from this site bear resemblance. The upper band of pl. xxiii, *b*, indeed, is covered by a pattern of direct Luna Ware affiliations. All of these pieces, however, have the yellowish slip characteristic of Filadelfia.



FIG. 33.—Double effigy vessel, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica.  
(Length, 10.5 in.)

*Type B*—A second type consists of small bowls bearing the likeness of a human face, of which we may recognize several local variants. Fig. 28 shows two such vessels from Ometepe island, of which region they are typical. The features are modeled as in type A, and are covered with more elaborate and brilliantly colored designs, as can be seen from pl. xxii, *b*.

Fig. 29, *b*, shows a small bowl from Tola, Nicaragua, the face on which bears a local imprint difficult to put in words. The red stripings on the underbody are also characteristic of this district.

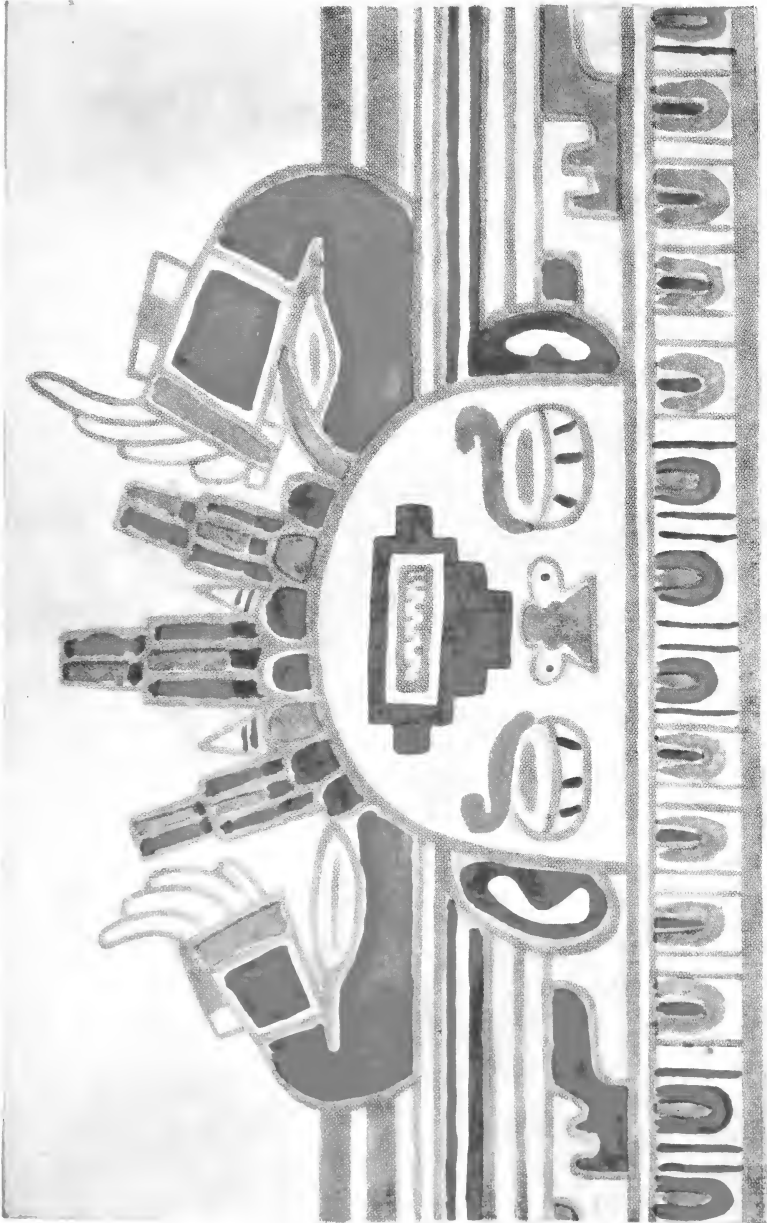
A third local group, seen in fig. 29, *a*, is found on the Nicoya

peninsula and thence to the east as far as the Cartago valley. The facial markings in the example given show little difference from those from Ometepe, but a gradual change takes place as one goes



FIG. 34.—Nicoya Polychrome bowls, Nicaragua. *a, b, d*, Santa Helena; *c*, Alta Gracia.

eastward, and fig. 30 presents a type of rather different quality, in which the eyes sometimes are outlined by the greatly conventionalized alligators characteristic of the Highland region (*b*). Pl. xxvi, *c*, is a somewhat unusual vessel from Nicoya. Although the



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA



outline is different from the specimens we have just examined, yet it belongs in the same group, for the bottom of the bowl is at the center of the vessel, and the foot, as in the others, is filled with clay balls which rattle. The flaring handles represent the snout of the alligator (see pl. CXIX, *b*).

*Type C*—A third type of face, occurring in the Nicoya peninsula and to the northward, is shown in figs. 31 and 32. The face is painted dead white, and the eyes, nose, mouth, etc., are raised in relief and painted black or red. The body of fig. 31 is not decorated, but fig. 32 bears a conventionalized alligator pattern on the back of the head, and the interior of the plate has a closely related basket-like design (fig. 74, *a*), both of which are found frequently in the northwestern part of the Nicoya peninsula. The supports of the plate, the top of the head, and the annular base are brick-red. The lips, the rim of the base, and the underbody of the plate are blood-red. The eyes and nose are black, and the face itself is white. Heads of this type modeled in the round are found in this region, and are discussed with figurines (fig. 147).

*Other Types*—Aberrant shapes are of sporadic occurrence. Fig. 33 shows a very highly polished double effigy jar, the faces of which suggest the large heads found on the Atlantic coast (fig. 261). On the other side of this jar is a painted conventionalized alligator. Fig. 21, *b*, shows a doughnut-shape vessel adorned with two modeled heads once connected by a handle. This type is also found in the Recuay region in Peru.

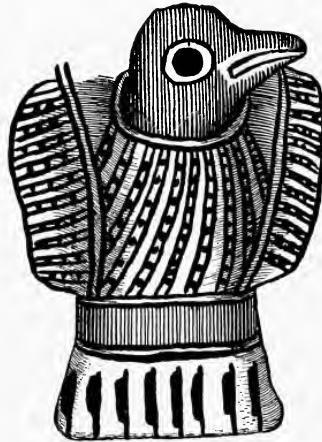


FIG. 35.—Leg of a tripod bowl, Santa Helena, Nicaragua. (Height, 3.25 in.)

### MODELED LEGS

The association of certain decorations with certain forms is a tendency constant in all art, and is a principle well illustrated by the treatment of the legs used to support vessels in this region. The tall jars which have been discussed are not infrequently carried on

three legs, which are treated as simple supports for the vessel or as the actual legs of the animal represented in effigy (see pl. xvi, *a*). On examination of the legs of bowls, however, it at once becomes evident that they rarely represent animal legs (fig. 34, *b*), but, on the contrary, they are typically treated as animal heads (fig. 34, *c, d*).

The animal represented in *c* and *d* is clearly the jaguar, distinguished by an open mouth with projecting canine teeth, much as this animal appears as a painted motive (pl. xxxii) and carved in stone (pl. ix). At times this type of head tends more toward likeness to the human head.

Fig. 35 shows the leg of a tripod bowl which represents a bird. This form, however, is rare, but is of special interest because the



FIG. 36.—Legs of bowls representing bird heads, Nicaragua. (Length, 2 in. to 3 in.)

two methods of portraying feathers are elsewhere found as geometric painted patterns, completely dissociated from birds. More usual leg forms representing birds, as seen in fig. 36, are projecting heads which differ from the jaguar heads only in the detail of modeling.

Animal heads used to carry vessels are also found in the Highlands of Costa Rica and northward as far as central Mexico. Southward, in the Chiriqui area, and in South America, they are not found; animal supports are common, indeed, but they show the entire animal with the tail or legs on the ground and the head next the body of the vessel.



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE. NICOYA PENINSULA. COSTA RICA

HEIGHT, 10.5 IN.



## CHAPTER V

### NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PAINTED DECORATION

NICOYA Polychrome Ware is ornamented primarily by painted patterns on the walls or floor of the vessel. We shall consider these designs in detail, for the purpose of discussing their origin and development, as well as their relationship with one another and with the art of other regions. It will be found that most of the decorative motives are derived from animal forms, but that they are so far removed from the prototype that identification depends on elaborate analysis.

#### THE HUMAN FIGURE

Man is a subject but rarely depicted on the painted vessels of the Pacific area, although it is a motive of unusual interest to us on

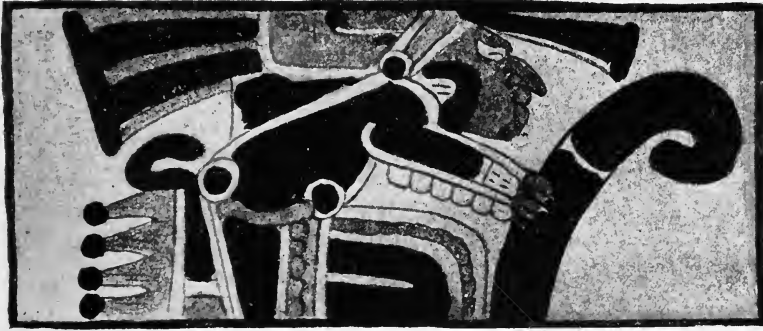


FIG. 37.—Polychrome human figure, Salvador. (Length, 4.25 in.)

account of its relationship with other regions. We shall describe three types of design, in each of which the human figure is differently portrayed.

#### SEATED HUMAN FIGURE

This design group is so obviously related to patterns found on Maya vessels of the period of the Old Empire that we shall begin

our discussion with the specimen seen in pl. xxvi, *a*, a jar found under stela M at Copan. As the date of stela M is 9.16.5.0.0 (495 A.D.), it follows that anything found underneath it is of equal or of greater age. The decorative motive, a seated human figure, is quite common on the eastern frontier of the Maya area, and we illustrate other Mayan examples from the Ulua valley (pl. xxvi, *b*) and from Salvador (fig. 37).

The seated human figure motive reached Nicaragua with but little change, as may be seen from a comparison of pl. xxvii, *b*, *c*, with

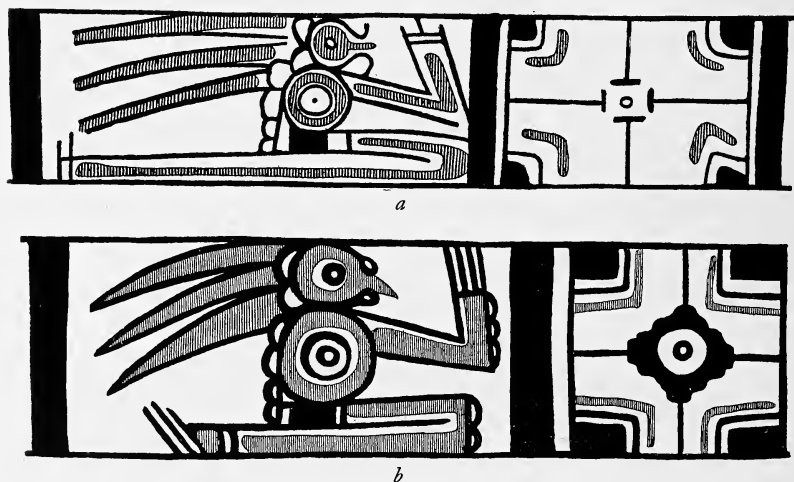


FIG. 38.—Patterns from outer walls of bowls. *a*, San Isidro de Guadalupe, Costa Rica (length, 10 in.); *b*, Costa Rica (length, 6.5 in.).

the preceding examples. Details, indeed,—the loop of a head-dress, the knot of a breech-clout,—are different, but it is impossible to escape the conclusion that very direct relationship exists. The curious long nose seen in pl. xxvii, *c*, is not peculiar to Nicaragua, for it is found also on specimens of pure Maya type, although not present on those chosen for illustration.

The Nicaraguan vessels on which this motive occurs are tall jars of the type illustrated in pl. xxvi, *d*, and decorated not only with painted patterns but also with designs incised before the application of the slip. This technic introduces us to a class of pottery described under the title of Under-slip Incised Ware (page 191). We shall point out here that the presence of linked designs, two different



a—COPAN, HONDURAS.

b—ULUA VALLEY, HONDURAS.

c—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA (HEIGHT 6 IN.).

d—ALTA GRACIA, NICARAGUA (HEIGHT, 11 IN.)

MAYAN AND PACIFIC AREA POTTERY

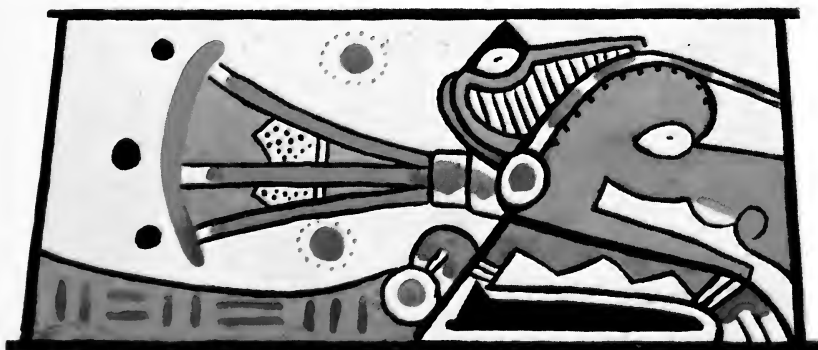




*a*



*b*



*c*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: HUMAN FIGURE MOTIVE

*a*—PANAMA, COSTA RICA. *b*—ALTA GRACIA, NICARAGUA. *c*—SANTA HELENA, NICARAGUA



patterns on a single vessel, is of the greatest importance in the study of ceramics.

To return to a consideration of the human figure, pl. xxix, *b*, exhibits a motive related to those already considered. The design, taken from the interior of a bowl, consists of two elements. On the left is a seated man with a breech-clout trailing across the lower margin of the enclosing panel and attached to the body by a large conventionalized knot. An elaborate head-dress with three large plumes crowns the head. On the right is a second motive, two red and white semicircles set in a black background, a pattern which recalls the wing markings of the bats on the celebrated vase from Chama, Guatemala (Dieseldorf, 1904, pl. XLIX). These elements are always found together on Pacific area pottery, and occur only on the inner rim of bowls decorated on the outer rim with the pattern seen in fig. 92, *c*. The distribution of these bowls is from Lake Nicaragua to the Nicoya peninsula.

A curious variant of the human figure motive is seen in fig. 38. The general pose is like that of the pieces already presented, but the body and head have been reduced to mere circles, connected, however, by loops which probably represent the folds of the breech-clout knot. In former examples the breech-clout extended across the bottom of the panel, but here it has coalesced with the legs, and a foot appears at the left end of the panel. This variant does not occur in Nicaragua, but is found in the Nicoya peninsula, often associated with a rim motive from the Nicoya geometric bowl group.



FIG. 39.—Nicoya Polychrome Ware, Santa Helena, Nicaragua.

#### PROFILE HUMAN HEADS

A second design group based on the human figure is derived from that we have just considered. The motive in pl. xxvii, *a*, is definitely connected with the type referred to, but has undergone distinct modifications. Thus the body has been largely eliminated, but the knot of the breech-clout is present (in the center of the

lower border), and the breech-clout itself has turned into a leg. The head-dress is represented principally by a spiral such as is seen on the feathers of pl. XXIX, *b*. Another transitional piece is shown in fig. 39, where the body has been dispensed with, while the arm and head are distinctly shown.

The reduction of the pattern through simplification is further illustrated in pl. XXVIII. The breech-clout of our original type we have seen turn into a leg. In *e* this leg is reduced to a mere foot attached to the back of the head. In *a-c*, *f*, *h*, curious appendages on the back of the head may be identified as legs in various stages of

conventionalization. In *g* the pattern is further reduced to fill a small square panel. In the lower panel of pl. XXXIII, *b*, there is shown a pattern in which the modified legs are divided from the head by a vertical band, resulting in a motive similar to one from the Ulua valley in Honduras (fig. 40).

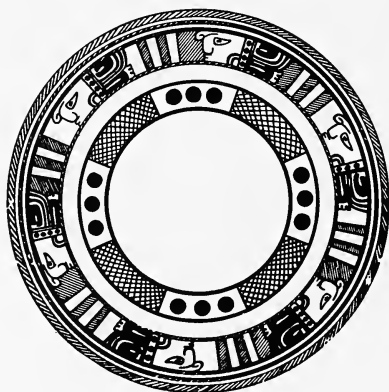


FIG. 40.—Interior pattern of a bowl, Ulua valley, Honduras. (After Gordon.)

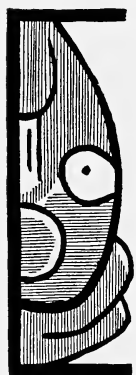
To this point modification from the fairly obvious representations of the human figure have taken place through simplification and elimination. However, in Nicoya Polychrome Ware there is a

constant tendency to build up as well as to eliminate, illustrated in pl. XXIX, *a*. The rim pattern here depicts a human face from which every recognizable element has disappeared except the eye. To the left of the eye is a curved line which suggests the head-dress plumes in pl. XXVII, *a*. On the other side of the eye are three (instead of two) curving appendages which we have shown to represent legs. We thus have the creation of new elements, which, in some of the patterns to be considered, may grow to be most conspicuous features. On the legs of the same specimen in rectangular panels faces appear, but in a more complicated form than previously (pl. XXVIII, *g*). In fig. 41 the design has been complicated by great enlargement of the nose, of which a less extreme example is seen in pl. XXVII, *c*.

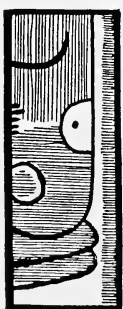
The futility of deriving chronological sequences from design series



a



b



c



d



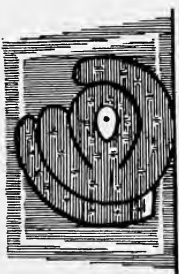
e



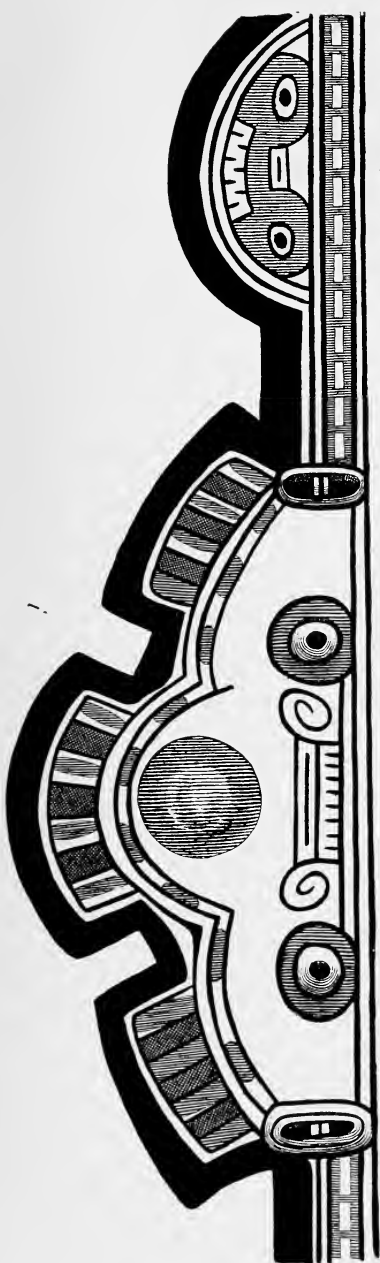
f



g



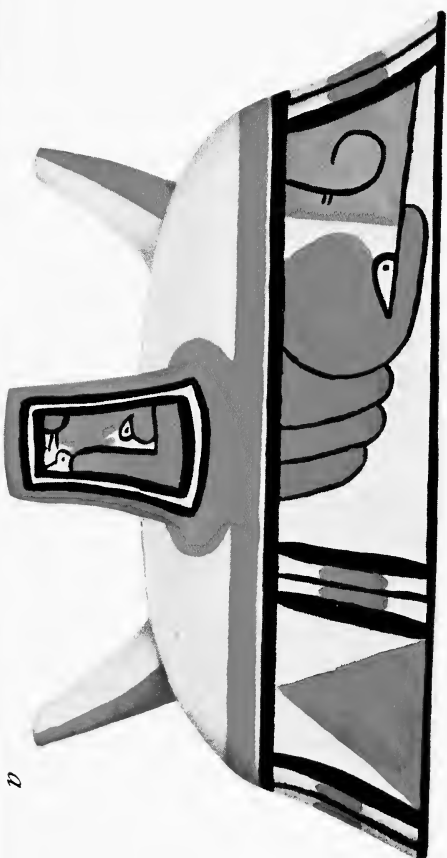
h



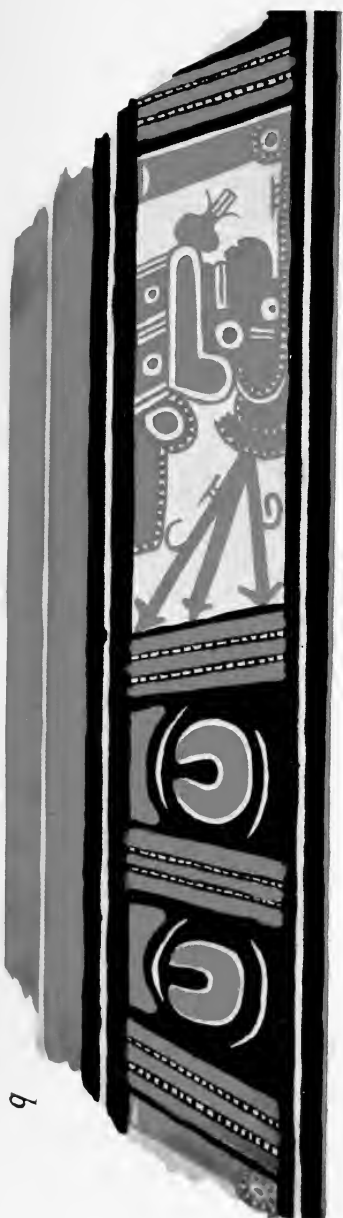
i

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: HUMAN-FACE MOTIVE  
a-f, h—OMETEPE ISLAND, NICARAGUA. g—ZAPATERO ISLAND, NICARAGUA. i—FILADELPHIA, COSTA RICA





a



b

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE, NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

DIAMETER OF a, 10 IN



is well illustrated by these patterns. We have seen that the Maya used this motive in the fifth century, but we have also found Pacific Area examples associated with the technic of incising under the slip, which, as indicated by some of the patterns, was manufactured as late as the fifteenth century.

In other words, while we may date given designs in certain regions we cannot assign dates to them in other localities on the basis of specimens without accurate accompanying archeological data.

#### THE STANDING FIGURE

The design shown in pl. XLVIII, *b*, represents a most unusual frieze of standing human figures, below which is a series of heads of the type just considered. The upper group consists of eight people,

two of whom are probably women. The faces are alternately white or orange and red, and with each color is associated a special form of nose, turned up in the case of the white faces, and curved downward like a parrot's bill in the red and orange faces. These facial types persist in the lower frieze, although only two of the seven heads are of the light-face type. Attached to each head is either a cross-hatched panel which may represent hair, or else a group of feathers. Plumes are also attached to the arms of several figures.

The unusual design of this specimen at once suggests the codices of Mexico and Yucatan, yet the connection cannot be based on definite correspondence of details. The figures portrayed are evidently disguised with masks, and the probability is that they represent either several deities or different aspects of at least two. The peculiar and distinctive noses recall certain Mayan divinities.

Pl. xxx, *b*, evidently belongs in the same class as the preceding specimen. A large head dominates the center of the design, resting on an object faintly suggestive of the throne on the Beau Relief at Palenque. About this head are placed four standing figures decorated



FIG. 41.—Rattle-base bowl, Ometepe island, Nicaragua. (Diameter, 4.5 in.)

with plumes and each holding a feather in the hand. These figures are separated by circles or semicircles fringed with plumes. Similar objects are seen in connection with the Human Figure in fig. 39, with the Feathered Serpent, type A, in pl. XLIV, *a*, and with the Monkey, type A, in pl. LXI.

One more piece of a unique nature remains for consideration. Pl. XXXI, *b*, represents a fragment of a ring-base jar, consisting of the base and part of the side. The base is pierced by four small holes, of which two are shown, and contains several clay balls which rattle. The geometric band at the bottom of the upper fragment contains two motives, of which the lower frequently is found on jars of this shape in Nicoya. The interlocking step scroll is characteristic of the entire Pacific area, and the use of red dots over orange is a feature frequently found on pottery, especially Luna Ware, from Ometepe island. The central panel of the upper fragment and the pattern on the base cannot be readily grouped with other ceramic remains. The striped faces suggest the faces found in the Mexican codices, and the hook-like head covering of the two upper left-hand figures recalls the scales found on the Aztec serpent. The feathered serpent, moreover, recalls the late Mexican method of portrayal of this monster and suggests only one of the many guises in which it appears in the region under discussion (see pl. LVII). The faces on the central panel show an indefinite resemblance to the Maya North Star god and also perhaps to the Monkey, type A, faces from Nicoya, which usually are accompanied by a speech scroll as is the central figure (fig. 62). The rosette attached to the arm has already been seen in combination with the human figure motive. The upper panel evidently contains two standing figures, but the break occurs at such a level as to prevent determination of their exact nature. Finally, the delineation of the patterns upon a black or red background is unusual both here and elsewhere in the Americas. It may here have some symbolic significance, perhaps the division between night and day, while the various deities portrayed may be the rulers of night and day, similar in their powers to those of the Aztec.

This specimen is grouped with pls. XXX, *b*, and XLVIII, *a*, although the figures are not definitely human, because in these three pieces we probably have the closest approach to the native manuscripts of the region, of which, unfortunately, no example has survived.



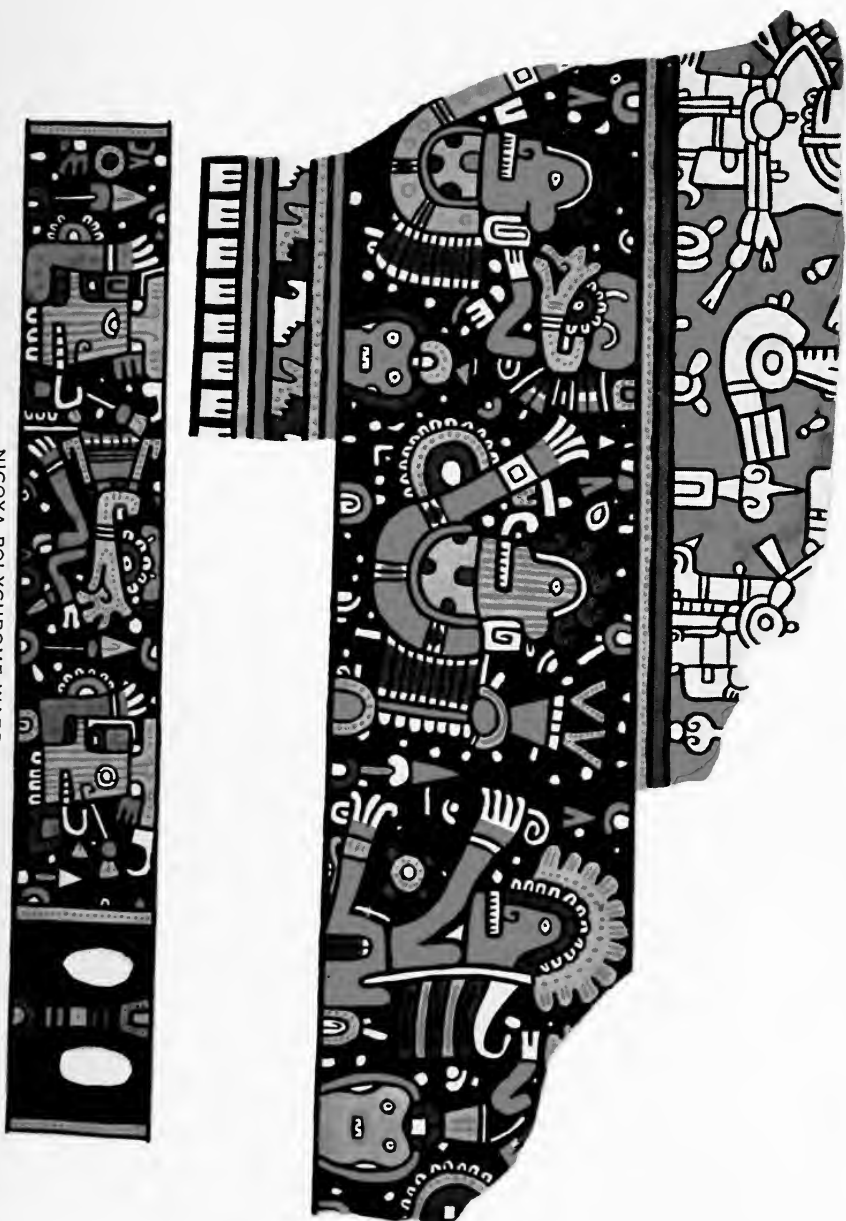
a

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE. OMETEPE ISLAND, NICARAGUA  
(DIAMETER, 9 IN.)



b





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE

FRAGMENTS OF JAR FOUND ON LAKE NICARAGUA, SIX LEAGUES NORTH OF RIVAS



## MAN-AND-JAGUAR MOTIVE

The vase seen in pl. xxxii, *a*, is one of the best known examples of the ceramic art of the Nicoya peninsula. It belongs to a strongly developed local group, marked by a white slip and one or more depressed bands on the rim, which we have called Culebra Ware.

The Man-and-Jaguar motive, in its simplest form, appears in pl. xxxii, *a*. It consists of a man, spear in hand, receiving the attack of a jaguar. The human figure is conventionalized and awkward. The hair is tied in a knot at the back of the head, from which stream three long feathers, which are joined by a broad red band forming an "aura," a phenomenon seen also with the plumes of the Feathered Serpent, type A (pl. xlv, *a*). The spear, which apparently grows out of the wrist of the man, is decorated with similar plumage, thus balancing the entire figure in a way suggestive of the Feathered Serpent, type C (pl. l, *b*). The jaguar, although partially conventionalized, is delineated with considerable force. Emphasis has been laid on certain features which become greatly exaggerated in the more conventional representations of this animal. Thus the upper jaw is elongate and the upper incisor is out of scale; also the shoulders are hunched, the legs drawn up under the body, and the tip of the tail curved back on itself. The red circles and concentric rings used to fill blank spaces in the pattern are characteristic of Culebra Ware.

A second specimen, pl. xxxii, *b*, represents the human figure so greatly conventionalized that all the parts cannot be made out. The two legs may be recognized without difficulty, above which lies a confused mass, flanked by long plumes which balance each other in front and behind the head. The spear has been eliminated, but a reminiscence of it is preserved by the plumes in front of the face. The jaguar, set off in a separate panel by broad red bands, is marked by lack of the force or spring which appears in *a*.

The next example (pl. xxxiii, *b*) portrays a most awkwardly drawn man, much too large for the available space. The head-dress is large also, and almost forms a dividing band between the repeated pattern. The jaguar is shown in a new position, its head turned away as if to avoid the thrust of the spear. In pl. xxxiv, *b*, the jaguar is retreating from the human figure, looking back over one shoulder in apprehension, scarcely justified by the fact that the man carries the spear on his nose and chin. The man, again

too large for the panel, is represented in a kneeling position suggestive of the Human Figure motive already considered (pl. xxvii). Pl. xxxiii, *a*, shows a man in a new position with outstretched arms, while the jaguar has taken on decided serpent-like qualities. The presence of a distinct "eye plate" is reminiscent of the serpent as portrayed in Mayan and Mexican art. Pl. xxxiv, *c*, shows the human figure in still another pose, and again greatly conventionalized. This specimen is the northernmost piece of Culebra Ware yet found, for it came from Ometepe island in Lake Nicaragua. The slip and clay are identical with those of the examples from the Nicoya peninsula, so that it probably passed northward in trade.

The examples of the Man-and-Jaguar motive thus far described have all been taken from the external surfaces of jars or of deep bowls. A slightly modified form of the same pattern occurs also on the inside of flat dishes. The example seen in pl. xxxiv, *a*,

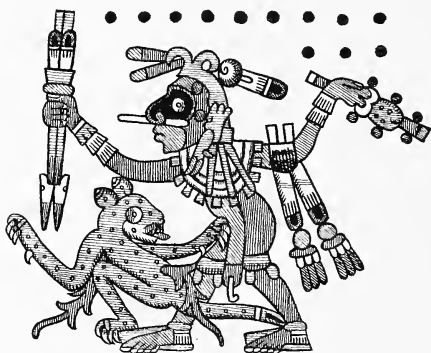


FIG. 42.—The god Mixcoatl attacks a jaguar. (Codex Féjervary-Mayer.)

illustrates this type. As in the preceding specimens, the jaguar is portrayed with a certain realism, but marked by an elongate upper jaw, large canine tooth, hunched body, curved tail tip, etc. The human figure, however, has been reduced to a head, seen full-face and no longer in profile. This head is partly framed by twin serpents, the heads of which form the ears of the man, a conception undoubtedly borrowed from the goldsmith in whose handiwork similar heads are frequently found (pl. LXXVIII, *a*). It is worthy of note that the red spots and circles used to fill blank spaces on other examples of this pattern still persist. Another specimen of the same variant (pl. xxx, *a*) shows a modified form of jaguar and a human face differing in detail from the previous example.

A special interest is attached to the Man-and-Jaguar motive, because a close parallel to it occurs in several Mexican and Mayan codices (fig. 42) in which a man armed with a javelin and an atlatl is represented in combat with a jaguar, which may or may



*a*

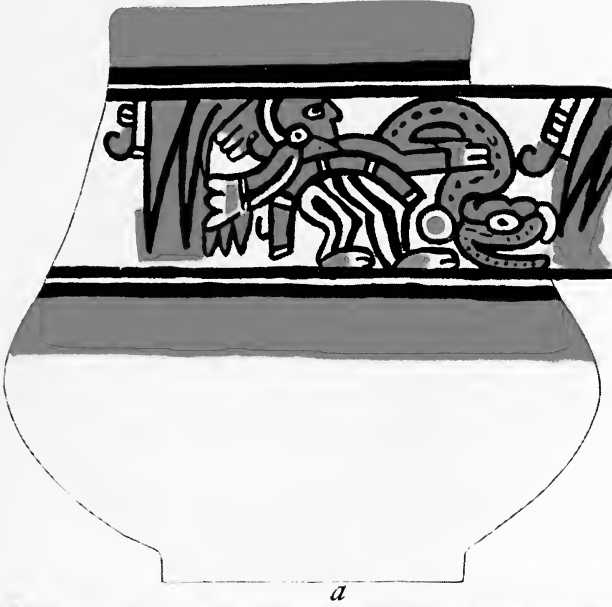


*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MAN-AND-JAGUAR PATTERN  
NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

HEIGHT OF *a*, 7 IN.

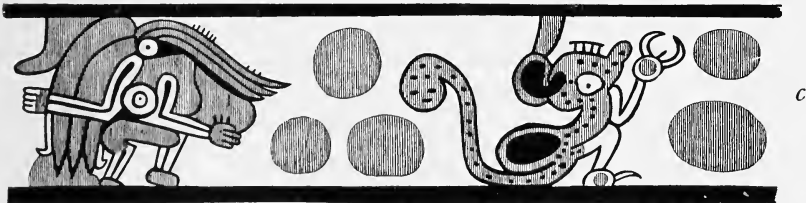
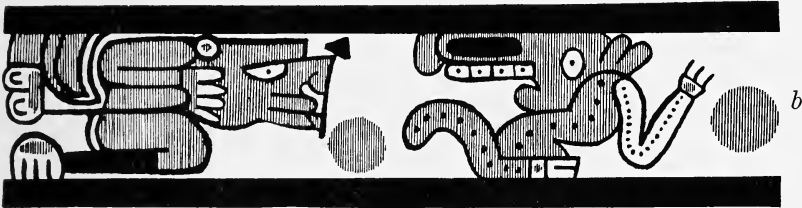
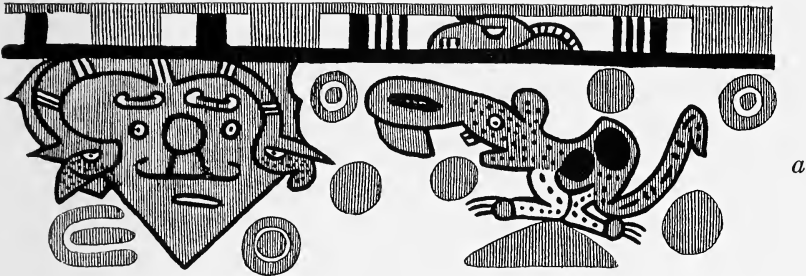




NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MAN-AND-JAGUAR PATTERN

*a*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA; HEIGHT, 7 IN. *b*—PANAMA, COSTA RICA





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MAN-AND-JAGUAR PATTERN  
*a*—COSTA RICA. *b*—PANAMÁ, COSTA RICA. *c*—OMETEPE ISLAND, NICARAGUA



not be attacking a prostrate man. Seler (1902-1903, pp. 115-116, 172) has shown that in Mexico the jaguar was regarded as the devouring demon of darkness, through whose attempts to consume the sun eclipses were caused, and he suggests that this scene represents the repulse of the jaguar by the god Mixcoatl in the guise of the Morning Star. If this explanation is accepted and can be applied to the Culebra Ware pattern, the associated red discs may represent sun symbols. These discs are not characteristic of the Nicoya Polychrome Ware as a whole, and are rarely found except with the Jaguar and Man-and-Jaguar patterns on Culebra Ware.

As already stated, Culebra Ware is found principally in the Nicoya peninsula in the region of the Gulf of Culebra. Trade pieces have been discovered as far north as Ometepe island in Lake Nicaragua and to the west as far as Los Limones in the Highlands of Costa Rica.

### JAGUAR MOTIVE

We now come to a design group encountered in all parts of the Pacific area and one of the most characteristic motives developed there. In pl. xxxv, *a*, is a ring-base bowl, with the special rim type previously noted as being characteristic of the neighborhood of Culebra bay, on which is portrayed a figure that will be found, on careful comparison, to have the same elements as the jaguar of pl. xxxiv, *a*. Thus we find the elongate upper jaw, huge canine tooth, hunched shoulders, and recurved tail, all greatly emphasized. The hind-leg has disappeared entirely, and the fore-leg has become fused with the lower jaw—a feature more apparent in other examples. It will be noted that the nostrils and ears are represented by concentric circles which are connected by parallel lines on which the eye is appended, and the teeth, except the canine, are shown by lines parallel to the jaws, marked off in small segments. On the back is a geometrical figure, used apparently as a space filler, while in front of the upper jaw is a large "speech scroll".

In pls. xxxvi, *b*, *c*; xxxvii, *c*, and xxxix, *b*, progressive development of conventionalization is shown, and a new complication is added in the form of a decorated panel attached to the tail, so that only by keeping the development of each part in mind is it possible to recognize the animal origin of such forms as are shown, for instance, in pl. xxxvii, *a*.

The addition of a new element is shown in pl. xxxvi, *d*, where two legs may be seen attached to the large canine tooth. Such additions indicate that all idea of the origin of the design had been lost, and that elements were juxtaposed for the ornamental effect. In this instance the lower jaw curves back on itself, resulting in a form which is often used to portray a foot, especially in the Highlands of Costa Rica. Thus the animal is shown with three front legs.

A second example of this type is shown in pl. xxxviii, *a*, where the additional legs run vertically between horizontal bands, thus forming a panel border.

Pl. xxxvi, *e*, represents a double-headed jaguar with three and four added legs at each end, which, with the legs forming the lower jaw, make a total of nine legs for the whole animal. This monster illustrates a tendency to balance designs, which, though rarely highly developed, is constantly encountered in Chorotegan ceramics.

Pl. xxxvii, *b*, shows the introduction of a new element in the form of a conventionalized head inserted behind the tail of the jaguar. This piece also has four additional legs forming a panel border. Another feature of interest is the unusual color scheme, which includes black used as a filler as well as for outline, and also the use of purple in addition to the orange and red.

Finally, in pl. xxxv, *b*, there appears a slight variation from the more usual forms. The jaws here are of nearly equal size, the canine teeth, while very large, are more of a "tooth-like" shape, and the fore-leg is shown distinct from the jaw. Also it should be noted that the body has practically disappeared, and the tail is enormously developed. The tendency toward balance may be seen in the decorative triangles on the tail panel and on the additional legs.

The examples thus far considered have come from the Pacific region. This design also extends into the Highland region, where it was doubtless regarded as a borrowed geometric pattern, as all idea of the jaguar has disappeared. The example in pl. xxxviii, *b*, is a deep tripod bowl with diagonal slits in the legs, a form typical of the San José valley, centering perhaps at Escasu. The design undoubtedly belongs in the Jaguar group, although slightly modified. The jaw, especially, has been greatly enlarged, and both the upper and lower extremities are folded back in a manner regularly used to portray legs and claws. The tail is rendered by a rectangular



*a*

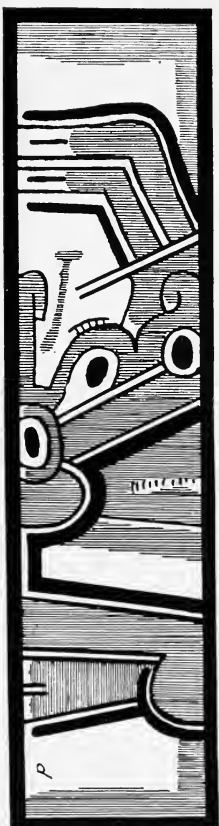


*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: JAGUAR MOTIVE

*a*—COSTA RICA; HEIGHT, 5 IN. *b*—FILADELPHIA, COSTA RICA





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: JAGUAR MOTIVE

ll—COSTA RICA; lb-e—OMETEPE ISLAND, NICARAGUA





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: JAGUAR MOTIVE: COSTA RICA



panel divided by a zigzag, which forms two of the elements usually employed as tails.

The patterns shown in pl. xxxvi, *a*; xxxvii, *a*, and xxxix, *a*, are typical of the Highland region. They do not yield to analysis, although various elements entering into the composition of the Jaguar motive can be discerned. Further knowledge of the region east of the Gulf of Nicoya would doubtless provide examples of the pattern through which the development of this Highland form could be traced.

A somewhat simpler variation, of which an example appears in pl. lxvii, also is found in the Highland region. Hartman (1901, pl. 35) has illustrated an almost identical specimen, also associated with the monkey, which he uncovered by excavation at Chircot.

The Jaguar pattern is found from Ometepe southward to the Gulf of Nicoya, thence in a modified form eastward as far as the Cartago valley.

In a general way this pattern is curiously Mayan. Not only is this suggested by the type of curved line employed, but the pose of the animal suggests that of the Maya two-headed dragon (fig. 59). Also pottery from Mexico sometimes bears a design which appears to be related (fig. 43). This motive is probably the commonest pattern of the Pacific region, with the possible exception of the Feathered Serpent, type

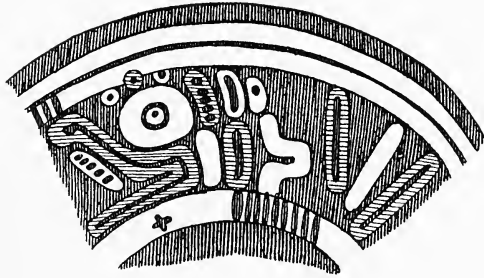


FIG. 43.—Pattern from inner bowl wall, Tepic, Mexico.

C, which is found primarily on tall jars, whereas the Jaguar is never found on jars or vases with the exception of a few pieces confined entirely to the Culebra Ware (e. g., pl. xxxviii, *a*).

#### SILHOUETTE JAGUAR MOTIVE, TYPE A

The second Jaguar motive to be considered is found on the exterior surface of jars, usually against a background filled with solid black. The specimen shown in fig. 44, *a*, represents the jaguar crouched on its haunches with the fore-paws off the ground. The

head appears in the upper right-hand corner of the panel, and the eye is easily seen, beneath which is the open jaw, shown in red, from which the tongue, shown in white, falls to the bottom of the panel. The fore-legs are represented by straight parallel lines, at the end of which are four claws. The body is marked by black circles and dots, and the tail by red rectangles.

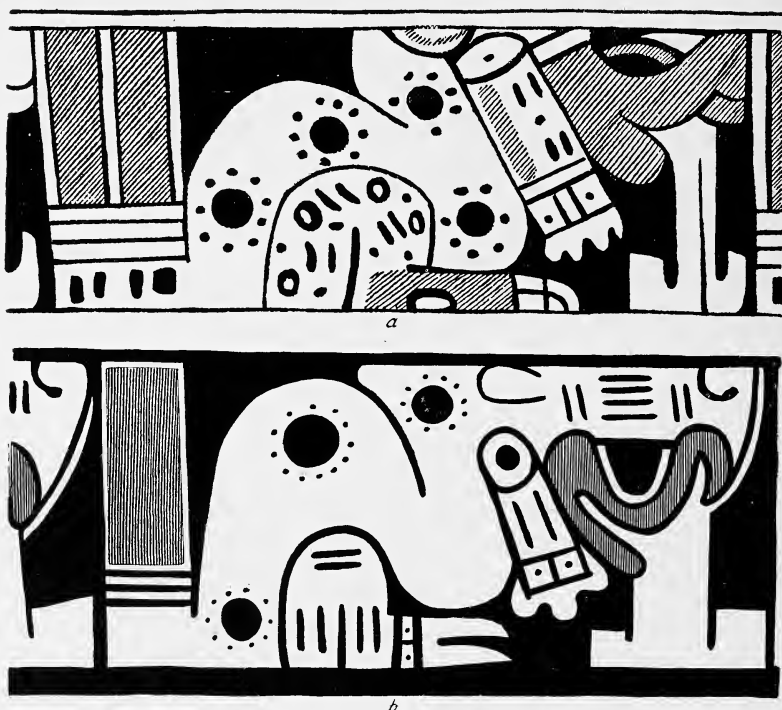
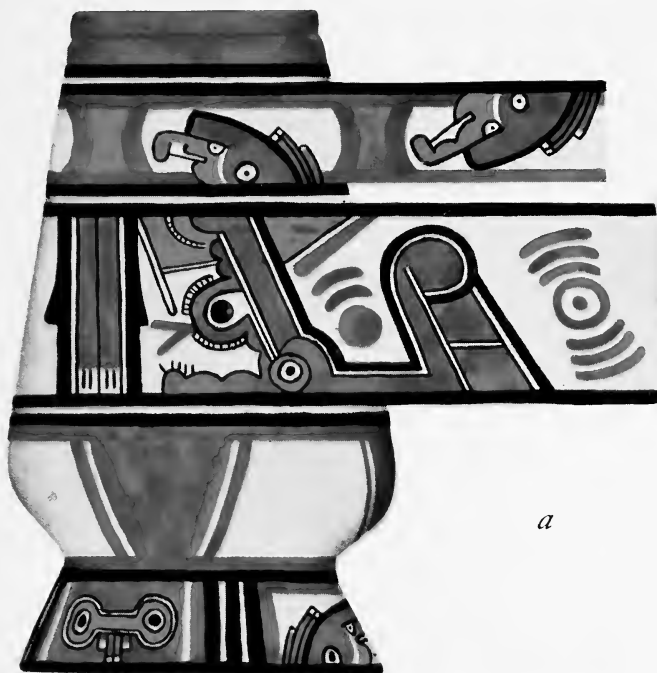


FIG. 44.—Silhouette Jaguar patterns, type A. *a*, After Spinden, 1917; *b*, Nicoya peninsula (length, 9 in.).

A second example (fig. 44, *b*) differs from the preceding one in detail, but the essential features are the same. A slightly different treatment is seen in pl. XL, which is unfortunately too badly battered to be completely drawn. While the two previous patterns come from globular bowls, this specimen is a tripod cylindrical jar of Maya type. This affiliation with Maya art is borne out by the design itself, for the treatment of the jaws and the tongue is very similar to that seen in certain examples of the Mayan serpent



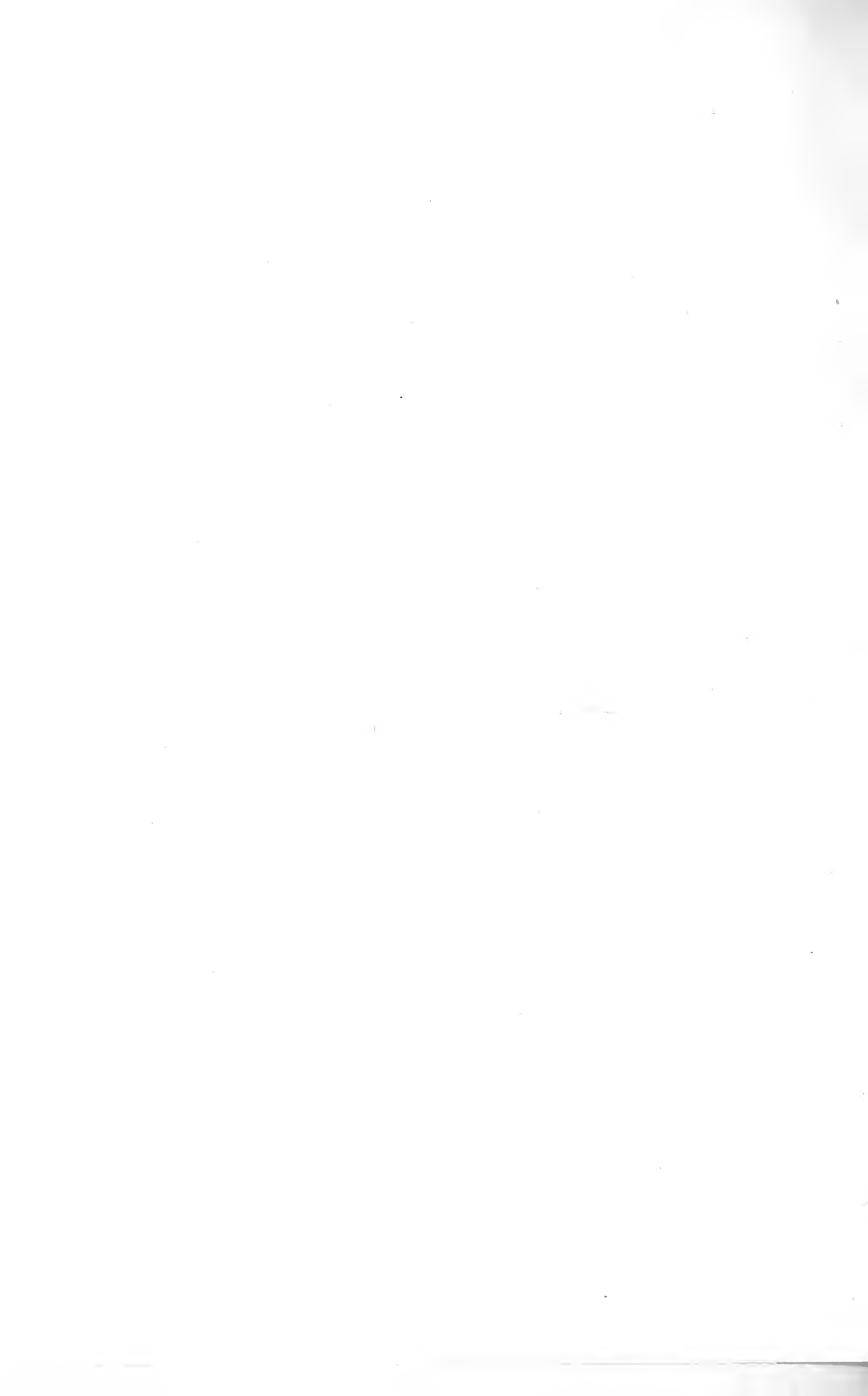
*a*



*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: JAGUAR MOTIVE

*a*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA; HEIGHT, 10 IN. *b*—COSTA RICA; HEIGHT, 4 IN.





*a*

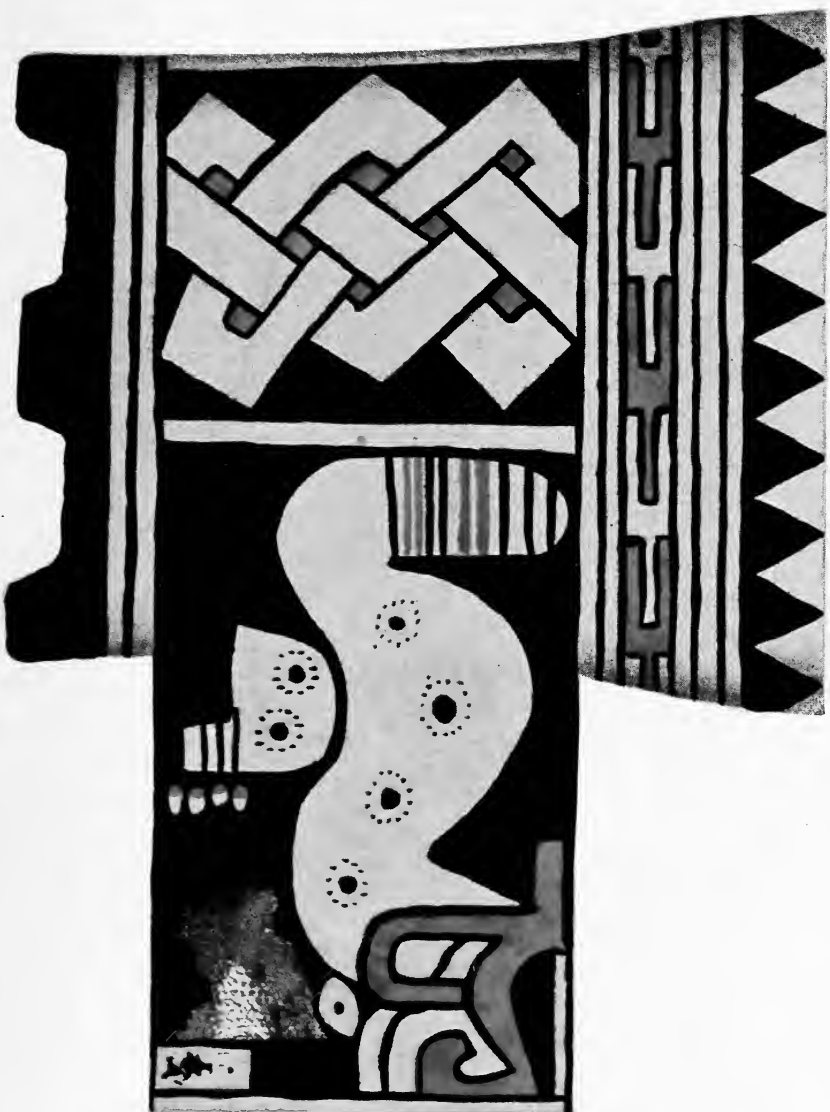


*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: JAGUAR MOTIVE

*a*—COSTA RICA. *b*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA; HEIGHT, 6 IN.





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: SILHOUETTE JAGUAR MOTIVE, TYPE A  
NICOYA, COSTA RICA

HEIGHT, 6 IN.



or dragon forms. The treatment of the jaw accords also with certain patterns found on the Luna Ware Serpent figures in Nicaragua (pl. xc).

This Jaguar motive is thus far known only on the Peninsula of Nicoya.

#### SILHOUETTE JAGUAR MOTIVE—TYPE B

Spinden (1917) has published an animal series, often highly conventionalized, which is reproduced in our fig. 45. This animal he has called the crocodile, which is improbable, as the beast here represented has well-marked ears. A more probable identification is the jaguar, especially in view of the treatment of the legs seen in pl. XLII, *a*, *c*, *d*, which recalls the manner of the jaguar of pl. xxxiv, *a*. An illustration in colors is given in pl. XLI, *b*. In fig. 46, *a*, is shown a specimen in which conventionalization has com-

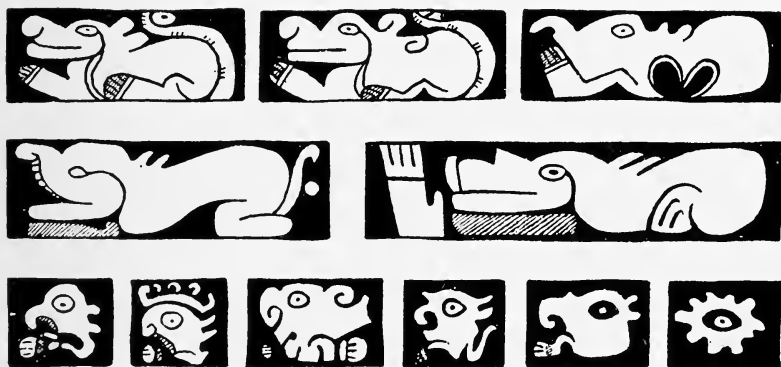


FIG. 45.—Silhouette Jaguar patterns, type B. (After Spinden, 1917.)

menced, and it is carried to a high degree in *b*, in which only the eye and the two legs at the bottom of the panel can be identified with certainty. Other variants are shown in fig. 45.

This pattern is found primarily upon the outer surface of vases, typically around the neck of carefully painted vessels of the class seen in pl. XLI, *a*. The geometric designs on this specimen are often found with this type of Jaguar motive, as well as the broad, vertical, black bands. Pl. XLII, *c*, carries this pattern around the base, but with the animals upside down. The top zone of this piece is decorated with a Feathered Serpent, type C, pattern, with which the Silhouette Jaguar is constantly associated.

Another form of delineating this motive appears on a class of jaguar effigy jars of which a splendid specimen is shown in pl. XLIII. The head, as well as the fore- and hind-legs, the former resting on the latter, is modeled in the round. The neck of the vessel is adorned with a broken-down variant of the Feathered Serpent, type C (pl. L, *i*), and the legs and a band about the animal's neck are completely covered with Silhouette Jaguar heads.



FIG. 46.—Silhouette Jaguar patterns, type B. *a*, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica; *b*, Siete Cueros, Costa Rica; *c*, *d*, Nicoya peninsula.

More rarely this class of jaguar is seen on the exterior rims of bowls, of which two examples are given in fig. 61 and pl. XLII, *a*, *b*. In both of these examples two broad black bands depend from the decorated zone, forming a cross on the bottom of the vessel. These may be compared with the vertical black bands associated with the jaguar as seen in pl. XLI, *a*. The bowl in pl. XLII, *b*, appears to be intermediate between the style of Nicoya Polychrome Ware and Luna Ware, on which this jaguar pattern also is found (fig. 105).

In the majority of cases this motive is shown against a black background, a fact which has suggested the name given to it. The treatment strongly suggests negative painting, a technic that ranges from Mexico to Peru and which is highly developed in the adjacent Chiriqui region. This method of painting involved the use of wax to cover those portions of the vessel which it was desired should



*a*



*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: SILHOUETTE JAGUAR MOTIVE, TYPE B  
NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

HEIGHT OF *a*, 11 IN.





*a*



*b*



*c*



*d*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: SILHOUETTE JAGUAR MOTIVE, TYPE B

*a*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA (DIAMETER, 5 IN.). *b*—OMETEPE ISLAND, NICARAGUA. *c*, *d*—NICOYA PENINSULA





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: JAGUAR EFFIGY VASE. NICOYA  
PENINSULA, COSTA RICA



not be colored. The piece was then dipped in paint and the wax was melted off, carrying away the paint which had covered it, but leaving the color unimpaired on the remainder of the vessel. This treatment was perhaps derived from the goldsmith's art, and it is often strongly developed in regions noted for skilful metal casting by the *cire perdue* process, which also involved the use of wax. In the Nicoya pottery, however, negative painting is totally absent, although it is simulated by this group and others in which the design is outlined against a dark background (see pl. LXXIX, *b*). It is probable that the black background was a conscious imitation of negative painting, for it reached its highest development in Nicaragua, Nicoya, and Honduras, where negative painting is not found. In Guatemala, however, where this form of painting reappears, the black background at once becomes less common. In Yucatan mural paintings with black backgrounds occur at Tulum and elsewhere. They also may be seen in Maya codices. In southern Peru, beyond the limits of true negative painting, patterns outlined in black reappear, especially in Nasca ware. Also the same effect is obtained by designs painted in white on black panels.

Geographically the Silhouette Jaguar pattern is confined to southwestern Nicaragua and the region of the Gulf of Nicoya.

## CHAPTER VI

### NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PAINTED DECORATION—*Continued*

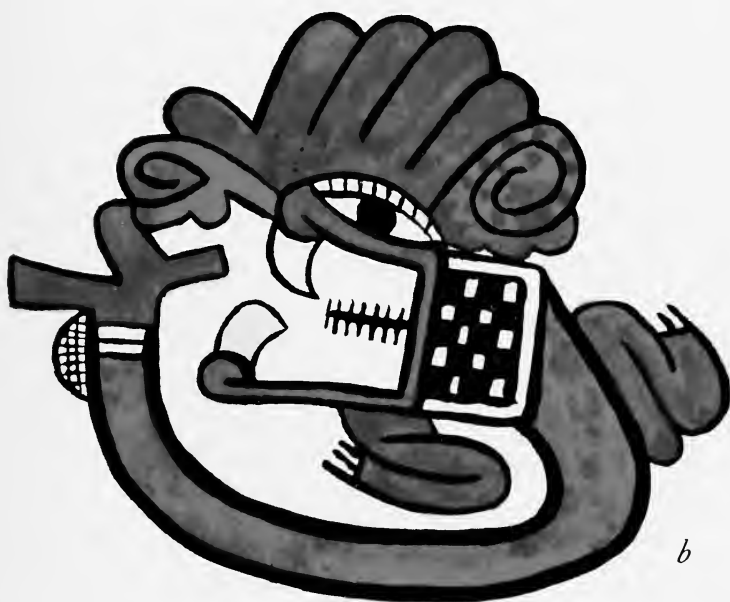
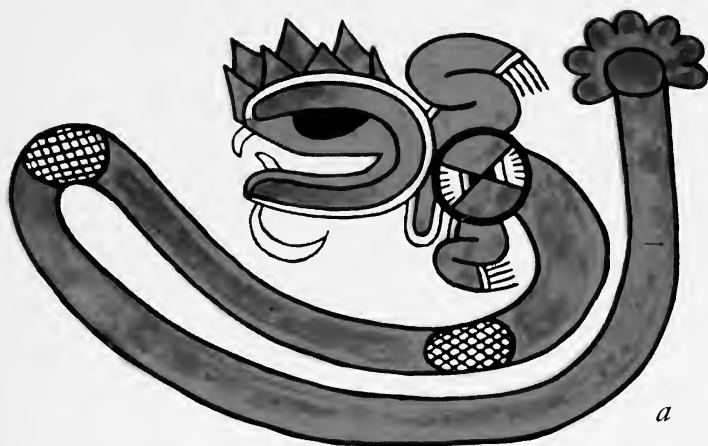
#### THE PLUMED SERPENT COMPLEX

THERE is a constant tendency in all parts of the world to associate mythological monsters with religious symbolism. European examples, such as the sphinx and the unicorn, are well known, and such conceptions still persist in rural communities, in spite of the disillusioning light of modern science. This basic need of religious symbolism was filled in the Western Hemisphere primarily by the plumed serpent or dragon, which is found in the art of the natives in practically unbroken distribution from southern Canada to Panama, and which, in a modified form, is found in South America as far south as Argentina.

In Central America, however, this motive reaches its highest development, and indeed it is often the most important feature in the esthetic efforts of many peoples.

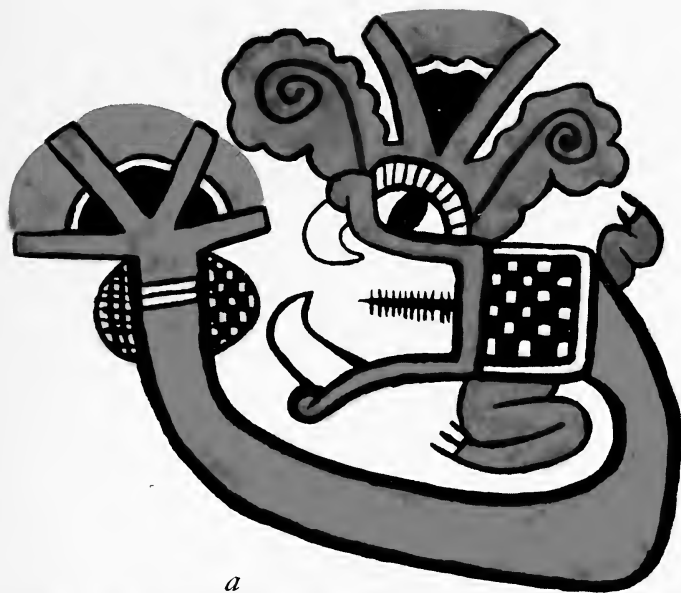
While the origin of this mythical monster, the basic symbol of New World ritualism, must date from the first quickening of the artistic impulse among the American Indians, it is nevertheless clear that the fundamental zoölogical conception is an animal combining the attributes of a bird, a snake, and a jaguar, the importance of each varying with period, place, and people. Thus among the Maya of the Old Empire great emphasis was placed upon the jaguar and serpent ancestry of this monster, whereas in Toltec and late Maya art the bird and serpent features are stressed, and the Aztec sometimes included certain attributes of the alligator. Northward from central Mexico, through the southwestern United States and the Mississippi valley as far as Canada, the serpent is represented with feathers on the head and tail. In western South America a very similar notion is found in the art. Although the serpent and bird attributes tend to become subordinate to the jaguar, this monster can be identified in the art of Recuay, Chicama, Chavín, and even as far south as Nasca (fig. 284).

The multifarious changes and conventionalizations of this wide-

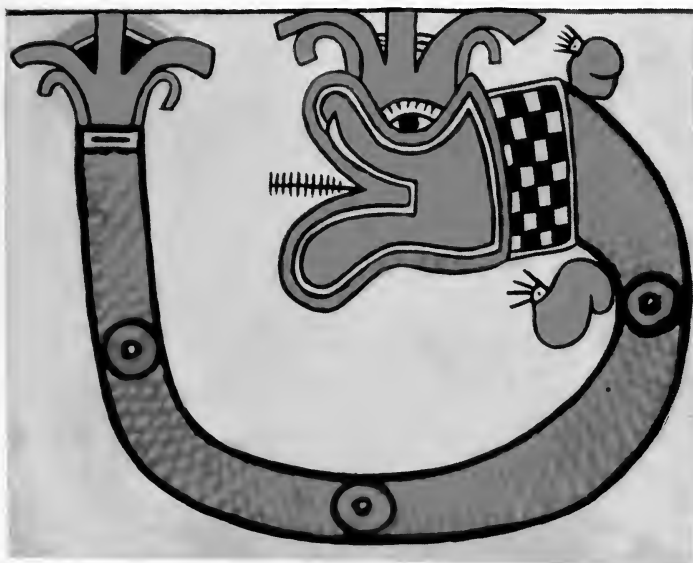


NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE A  
NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA





*a*

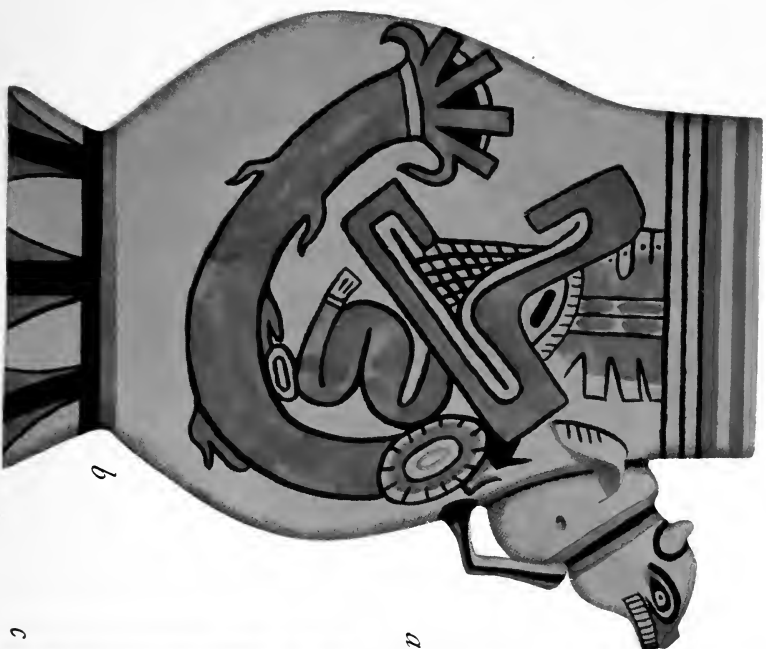


*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE A

*a*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA. *b*—COSTA RICA





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE A

*a*—SANTA HELENA, NICARAGUA. *b*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA; HEIGHT, 10.5 IN. *c*—BOLSON, COSTA RICA



flung design group are too complex to be discussed within the present work. Analysis of the aspects seen in Costa Rica and Nicaragua is in itself a difficult problem.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE A

Pl. XLIV, *a*, represents a plumed serpent from the Pacific region. The eyes, mouth, and fangs are clearly pictured. The legs are shown with the terminal markings regularly used to delineate claws. Upon the body are cross-hatched areas representing the scales, while the head is crowned by large plumes and the tail by a rosette similar to that seen with the Human Figure motive (fig. 39). Pl. XLIV, *b*, shows an example with plumes on the head, and pl. XLV, *a*, evinces a tendency to balance the plumes of the head and the tail, which is completely developed in *b*, where the two sets are almost identical.

Pl. XLVI, *a*, introduces a new feature, the conventionalization of the legs, and also a new type of marking about the head and the neck, which persists in the more complex forms. Another new feature is the method of showing the head and tail plumes, which, together with the type of pl. XLV, *b*, form the usual manner of presentation. Pl. XLVI, *c*, again shows conventionalized legs and a variant body pattern which persists in the less naturalistic types.

Pl. XLVI, *b*, gives a complete outline of a pear-shape jar bearing a plumed serpent design, showing the way in which the decoration is applied. Type A appears only on this form of vessel. The serpent figure shows several interesting features, such as the transference of the pattern outlining the head and neck of pl. XLVI, *a*, to the tips of the head plumes, and also the presence of hook-like appendages on the body, which recall the scutes on the Mexican alligator as shown in the codices. Further development in this direction is seen in pl. LXV, which represents a design from a curious group of patterns illustrating the running together of the Monkey, Serpent, and Alligator motives. Another feature of importance (pl. XLVI, *b*) is the transference of the cross-hatching from its proper place on the body to the mouth. This marks the beginning of a break-up carrying us into type B and later into many less obviously connected forms. This, the simplest presentation of the Plumed Serpent motive in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, has obvious parallels in Mayan and Mexican art, as well as in that of Peru (fig. 284, *b*).

Before leaving this motive, it will be well to indicate the most

important elements that persist in the conventionalized types to be discussed. These are: (1) The head and tail plumes; (2) the "aura" surrounding the plumes (pl. XLV, *a*, *b*); (3) the fangs; (4) the arms and hands; (5) the body markings, especially cross-hatching.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE B

We now embark on a complex course in which we follow the break-up of the plumed serpent into conventionalized reptilian motives, which, in turn, give way to geometric motives. While this whole complex has essential unity through the constant repetition of units, many of which we have already seen, it must not be forgotten that the aboriginal potter did not adorn his handiwork for the purpose of simple classification in water-tight compartments, and examples of design fusion occur constantly. Indeed, not only do geometric pat-

terns coalesce, but one animal merges into another with scarcely a break. Recognizing then that such classification as may be presented is merely to facilitate description and that the question of evolutionary sequence is taboo, we may proceed with our analysis.

In pl. XLVII is shown a tripod plate, the central pattern of which is related to the feathered serpent in pl. XLVI, *a*. The eye is clearly visible, also the open jaw facing to the left as usual. At the end of the lower jaw are the arm and claw. Above the upper jaw are abbreviated head plumes, to the right of which is a cross-hatched area representing the body. Below the cross-hatching lies the rest of the body, to the end of which are attached two more arms also terminating in claws, one of which should perhaps be regarded as the tail. The hook-like shapes around the rim of the plate may likewise pertain to the Feathered Serpent series. They may be compared with the pattern illustrated in fig. 57, *a*.

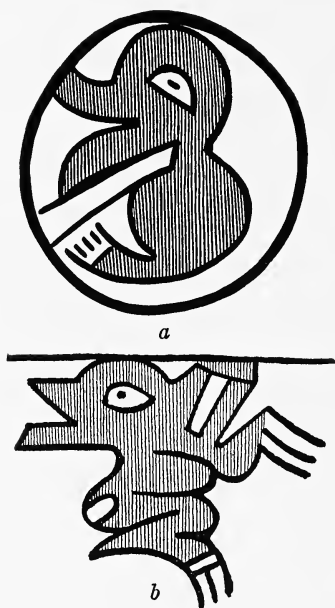


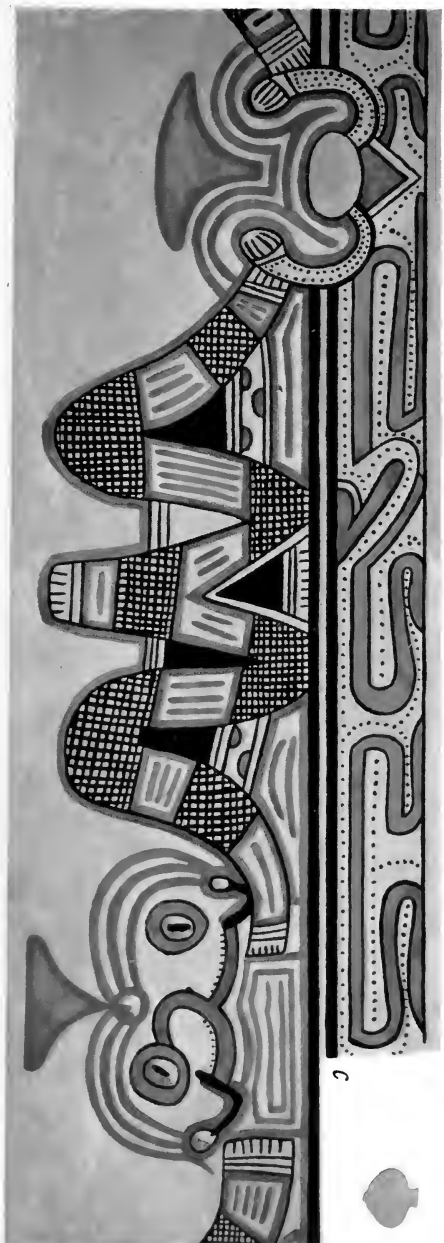
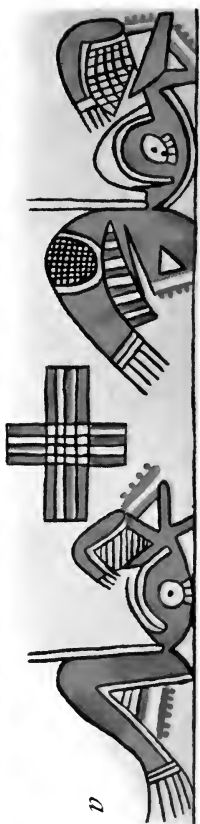
FIG. 47.—Conventionalized Serpent motive, type B, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica. (Diameter of *a*, 6 in.)



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE B  
NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

DIAMETER, 5.5 IN.





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE

d, c—PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE B, NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA. b—HUMAN FIGURES ON BOWL RIM, OMETEPE ISLAND, NICARAGUA



The central figure of pl. XLVII, however, marks a sharp break from type A. We now come to further changes which take us rapidly away from the original forms. Fig. 47, *b*, is a figure obviously connected with the preceding, but of a simpler character, which gives way to a type still more simple, shown in *a*.

Pl. XLVIII, *a*, shows another variation from the pattern of pl. XLVII. Starting with the right-hand figure, we can easily recognize an eye in the center, beneath which is a jaw. Attached to the nose, i.e., on the left, is a four-pointed plume, similar to the tail plume in pl. XLV, *a*. Between the plumes an "aura" is visible, while attached to the end of a plume is an arm. From the back of the head runs what may be the body and tail, or perhaps a second arm. In the bend is a second "aura". The left-hand figure is essentially similar to that just described, but is marked by the addition of cross-hatched areas.

The compound cross in the center of the drawing is of interest, because it is frequently found connected with this type of feathered serpent. It is also found on the same vessel with the pattern shown in fig. 47, *b*, which is thus doubly tied into the series. The phenomenon of associated designs in the pottery of Central America is one that merits further investigation. The constant linking of apparently unrelated patterns, often in different technics, such as incising and painting, is particularly characteristic of Maya pottery of the Great Period. In this instance the resemblance of the arms of the cross to the feathered serpent plumes and of the center of the cross to the cross-hatched body of the serpent suggests a possible connection.

A decorative variant of type B is seen in pl. XLVIII, *c*. This pattern comes from a big globular vessel with a cylindrical neck. On one side is a large human face. From the opposite side there once projected an animal head (now broken off), framed by a pair of curving arms. Between the two heads runs a zigzag motive representing the serpent body, at each end of which is a claw. A third claw is attached to the lower central point. The cross-hatched body markings show that this conception belongs in the Feathered Serpent series, while the markings on the inverted triangle in the center closely resemble the body markings seen in pl. XLVI, *c*. The upper pattern also probably belongs in the Feathered Serpent complex, and will be discussed later.

In group B also belongs the pattern shown in fig. 48. This design is obviously connected with the motive just discussed, the small

lumps at each end replacing the more fully rendered heads. The folds of the body also suggest the pattern in pl. XLVII.

Type B patterns usually are found on the exterior of jars, and occasionally on the interior of dishes. The center of distribution is the Nicoya peninsula. They are very rarely found in Nicaragua, but do occur in the western Highlands of Costa Rica.

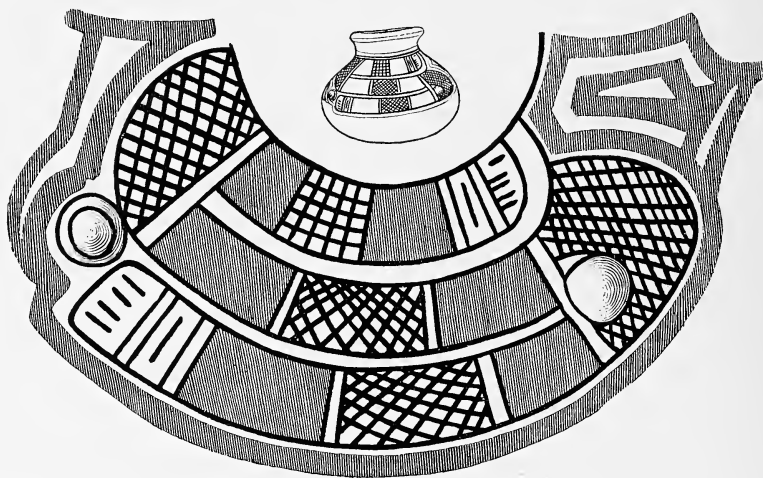
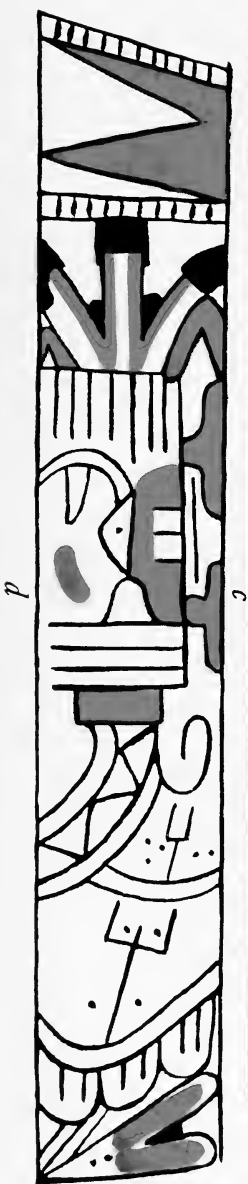


FIG. 48.—Conventionalized Serpent motive, type B, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE C

The connection of pl. XLIX, *a*, to the naturalistic forms of plumed serpent, if one may be permitted the term, is fairly obvious, yet certain changes have taken place. For instance, the head plumes have become displaced and are found in front of the open jaws; the fang, already abnormally large, has become even larger; the body, instead of curling around in front of the jaws, is beginning to assume a horizontal position.

A further step comes in pl. XLIX, *b*. The body is very much reduced and absolutely horizontal, and the head plumes, once *on* the head and now *in front of* the head, together with the tail plumes, tend to form a balanced design. A similar advance in degeneration appears in pl. L, *c*, which introduces us to a large group of patterns, of which several variants are shown.



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: VARIOUS PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVES

*a*—TYPE A, NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA. *b*—TYPE C, NICOYA PENINSULA. *c*—TYPE C ALTA GRACIA, NICARAGUA  
*d*—TYPE E, NICOYA PENINSULA



Taking pl. L, *b*, as the simplest form presented, we may pick out first the plumes at either end. Next to the plumes are black panels which represent the "aura" seen in connection with the plumes on the naturalistic types (pl. XLV, *a*). Next to the left-hand black panel is a large fang, which grows out of the nose. Below and to the right of the nose is a mouth. Above the mouth is a panel representing a face, at the top of which is an eye. To the right of the head are two circles connected by parallel lines which may be affiliated with the circular markings seen in pls. XLIV, *a*, and XLV, *b*. Again to the right we see the cross-hatched body markings, which connect with the black panel and tail plumes.

In pl. L, *a*, *e*, the introduction of a new pattern, representing feathers, is seen to the right of the head. This method of representation appears on the legs of the effigy vessel shown in pl. XIV and fig. 35. In pl. L, *a*, the fang assumes more the character of a tongue, and is rendered in black, the most usual method of portrayal. In *e* the tendency to balance the two halves of the design becomes more marked and reaches its climax in pl. XLIX, *c*, where, apart from the face, there is practically no variation in the two halves of the pattern. Pl. L, *f*, represents a simplification of this motive, in which we can see a face at the left, while at the right is the plumed tail bent upward.

Pl. L, *d*, again brings an important change in the transformation of the fang in front of the nose into an arm. From this develops a sub-series, of which *g* is a typical example which we will analyze in detail. At the extreme left is a hand grasping three black plumes, which, in the naturalistic form, surmounted the head. The black rectangle to the right of the hand is the arm. Above the

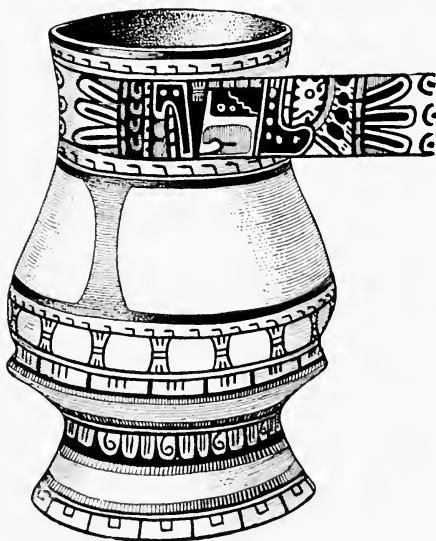


FIG. 49.—Ring-base jar with Conventionalized Serpent pattern of type C, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica. (Height, 7.5 in.)

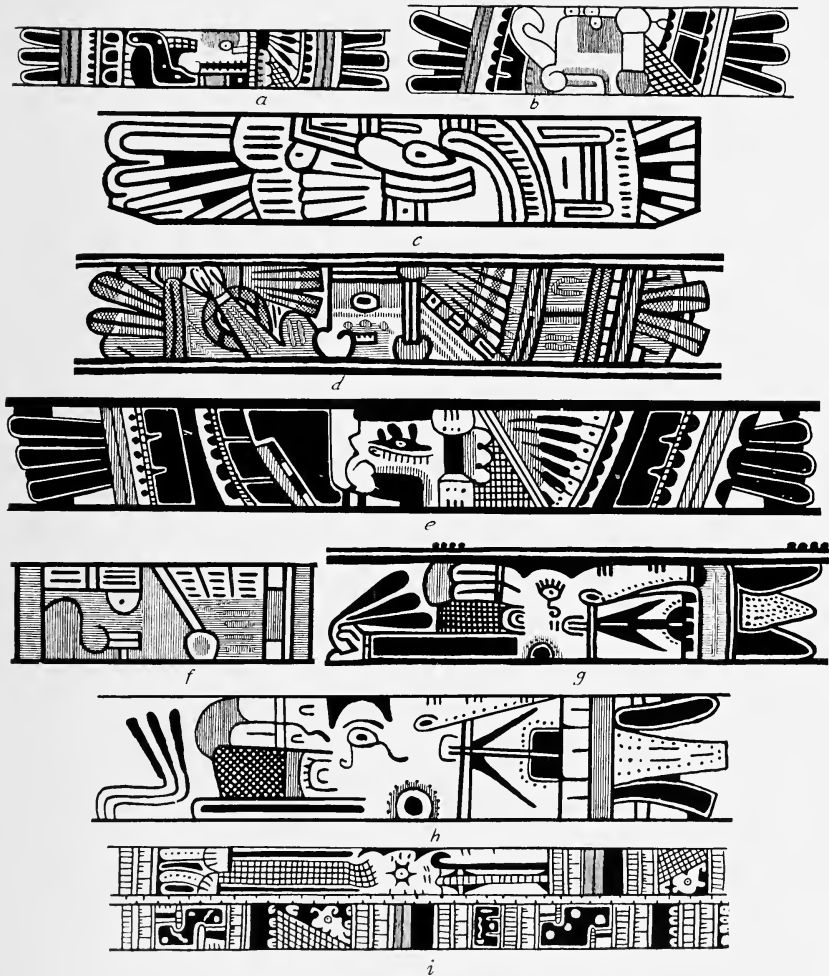
arm is a cross-hatched panel representing the body, above which are two white plumes attached to the head. To the left of these plumes is a red panel which is the fang. To the right of the arm is a semi-circle attached to the base line, doubtless representing the circular body markings. Above this is the eye. To the right again are various markings, while at the extreme right are the tail plumes.

Fig. *h* of the same plate shows a similar conception, but with no hand, and *i* represents the same idea gone utterly mad. In the upper portion we see an eye in the center. To the left are arms (solid black) and cross-hatching at the end of which come hands and then plumes. To the right of the eye are body markings like those of *g* and *h*, beyond which are feather patterns and finally cross-hatchings and a conventionalized animal head (see fig. 45). The lower line is a confused mass of enlarged fangs, cross-hatched body markings, "aura" panels, feather panels, animal heads, etc. Fig. 49 shows a vessel with a somewhat similar but simpler design. It will be noted that a small conventionalized head appears to the right of the central head.

Pl. LI, *a*, also represents this particular variant of type C. This example has passed beyond the stage of analysis, and it is doubtful if the maker realized that his pattern was related to more or less naturalistic motives. In the same plate, *b* is ornamented with purely geometric patterns, all of which may have descended from zoöomorphic forms, as has the motive with which we are dealing.

Before leaving type C, there are two more variations to note. Pl. LII, *b*, shows a pattern in which the tendency to balance the ends has gone. In *c* we find a somewhat similar, though simplified, conception. To show the essential unity of the serpent motives, the central panel of this design may be compared with the body markings of the naturalistic form in pl. XLVI, *c*, while the tail motive (on the right) is almost identical with that of pl. L, *b*. A further point is that the head tends toward a form common in the Nicoya peninsula and the Costa Rican Highlands, which can be identified with the Plumed Serpent (pl. CXLVI).

The Plumed Serpent motive, type C, is found principally on the decorated bands encircling the neck of pear-shape jars. However, some examples occur on the inner rims of shallow tripod bowls, most of which have come from the region of the Nicaraguan lakes.



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVES, TYPE C

*a, b, e*—BOLSON, COSTA RICA. *c*—SANTA HELENA, NICARAGUA. *d, g, i*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA. *f, h*—NICARAGUA





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE C  
*a*—BOLSON, COSTA RICA. *b*—COSTA RICA (COURTESY OF M. H. SAVILLE)



## PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE D

The next group is small and relatively unimportant. Pl. LIII, *c*, shows a flat plate unusual in that part of the design is painted on a red background. The pattern of interest here can at once be picked out by the brown feathers at each end, corresponding to the plumes at each end of type C. Between these feathers, and attached to the left-hand group of plumes, there is a face. The whole conception is very similar to that of type C.

Pl. LIV, *a*, shows a bowl in which the balance of the pattern has been lost by the disappearance of the tail plumes. At the left are the head plumes attached to the front of an open upper jaw in which the eye stands out prominently. To the right of this come body markings representing feathers. In *b* of the same plate is shown a similar pattern in which the feather markings on the body have been replaced by frets.

This motive is found on bowl rims from the region of the Gulf of Nicoya.

## PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE E

Turning back to pl. XLIX, *d*, we come to a design closely associated with the Plumed Serpent, type C. At the extreme left are two red triangles, usually found with the Monkey, type A (pl. LX, *a*). Next to this comes a mass of plumes shown in red with black tips, a form sometimes found in the Plumed Serpent, type A. The horizontal parallel lines next encountered correspond to the head plumes of pl. L, *g*. The semicircle springing from the base line is the front of the face, at the top of which is a triangular eye. The vertical lines to the right, of unknown function, correspond to those of pl. LII, *b*. The rest of the pattern to the right apparently represents feathers. Much added complexity is shown in pl. LII, *a*. Here again may be recognized the triangular eye in the center, flanked by parallel lines, which in turn are flanked by arm motives corresponding roughly to the balanced plumes of type C. At each end of the pattern is a series of arm motives of serpentine origin which defy analysis. Pl. LIII, *a*, shows this design applied to the neck of a jar, the analysis of which may be left to the imagination of the reader.

Pl. LIII, *b*, however, shows a simple balanced pattern in which can be identified the arms at each end and the triangle containing an eye in the center. Fig. 50, *b*, shows the same design applied to a

different field, the outer surface of a jar cover. The relationship is

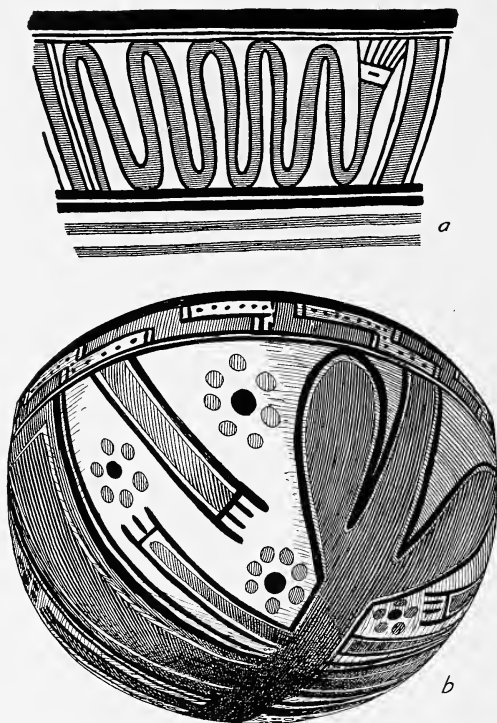


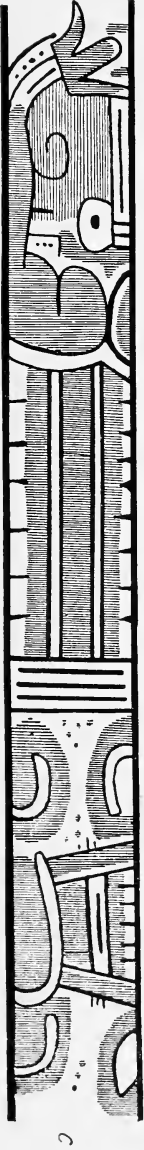
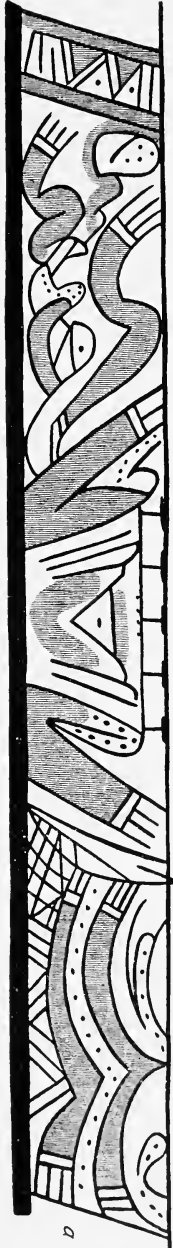
FIG. 50.—Conventionalized Serpent patterns, type E, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica. (Diameter of *b*, 4.25 in.)

present, although the exact nature of each part cannot be determined.

Two more modifications of type E are found. Firstly, in fig. 50, *a*, there is a pattern consisting only of an arm with a hand or claws at the end, but with very serpentine qualities in the arm. The other variant is more startling, for the eye triangle is filled in with a face, resulting in the form shown in pl. LV, *b*, which is the Monkey, type C (pl. LXVI, *b*).

When designs are radically modified, as in this instance, it is always open to argument how far the idea of the original conception persists. We commenced the study of this series with examples

which are not far removed from natural forms (type A), and have seen our elements break down into purely geometric patterns (pl. LIII, *b*), which, in turn, have been reëndowed with life (pl. LV, *b*). Thus, in this single series we have seen at work the two usually accepted philosophic conceptions of design creation: the evolution of the geometric from the zoöomorphic, and the creation of the zoöomorphic from the geometric. However, in our analysis we have left unconsidered the important element of time, and we must face the possibility that all these forms persisted at the same period and that there was constant borrowing and interchanging. As proof that this was so, we adduce the evidence of the bowl seen in pl. LV, *a*. The figures at each side offer but slight variation from that of *b*. The dividing

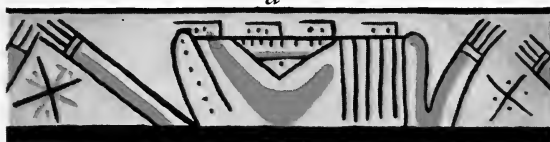


NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVES  
/—TYPE E, COSTA RICA. /—TYPE C, NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA. C—TYPE C, OMETEPE ISLAND,  
NICARAGUA





*a*



*b*



*c*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVES. COSTA RICA

*a, b*—TYPE E. *c*—TYPE D





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE D

*a*—SANTA HELENA, NICARAGUA (DIAMETER, 9.5 IN.). *b*—COSTA RICA (DIAMETER, 9 IN.)



panel consists of two T-like objects, and, attached to this panel, is the serpent plumage of which we have seen many examples (pl. XLV, *b*). Either this bowl was made at a time when indiscriminate borrowing of design elements took place, or else the basic conception of the plumed serpent has accompanied its multifarious transmutations, and the artist, feeling that he had not done justice to his subject, added the plumage as we might write a title under an illustration.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE F

The Plumed Serpent of type C occurs in the panels encircling the necks of tall jars and, more rarely, on the inner rims of tripod dishes. In the latter instance the bottom of the vessel is frequently covered by the same pattern modified to fill a circle. Pl. LVII, *a*, shows such a design which has retained the kind of head seen in the naturalistic forms. The head faces to the right, and we can perceive the open jaws and the eye crowned by plumes. The jaw is outlined in brown, and the red panel next to it doubtless represents the fang.



FIG. 51.—Conventionalized Serpent patterns, type F, Tola, Nicaragua.  
(Diameter of *a*, 4 in.)

The brown object and the scalloped red object projecting from the jaw in the lower right-hand corner probably form the tongue. At the bottom and slightly to the left is a doubled-up member which is either an arm or possibly a very much reduced body and tail.

Fig. 51, *a*, is more conventionalized. We can pick out a head surmounted by plumes flanked by highly conventionalized heads, and also we can see two arms, one running out from the nose and the other joined to the shoulder. Fig. 51, *b*, shows a square head and

large fang very similar to those found in type C (pl. XLIX, *c*). While an elaborate head-dress can be recognized, it is impossible to analyze this portion in detail, and the same is true of pl. LVI, *a*, which is obviously a break-down of the elaborate conception of pl. LVII, *a*.

Pl. LVI, *b*, shows the complete elimination of the lower jaw, a feature of frequent occurrence in Mayan and Mexican representations of reptilian motives. The eye in the center is here easily discerned, above which are elaborate head plumes. At the bottom of the circle are tail plumes, to the right of which is a panel representing the body, with markings comparable with those of pl. XLVI, *b*.

Close parallels to this pattern are found on the floors of bowls—painted and stamped—from the Vera Cruz region in Mexico.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE G

Turning back to pl. XLIX, *b*, we find a form described in explaining the break-up of the naturalistic plumed serpent into type C. Closely allied to this example are the two plumed serpents of pls. LVII, *b*, and LVIII, both of which appear on jars elsewhere illustrated (pl. xv, *d*, and fig. 27). The serpents of pl. LVIII are shown with open jaws and small fangs. Above the head, plumes are indicated by parallel vertical lines. The body is largely eliminated, and the tail plumes are shown by alternate red and white bands. At both ends of the figure are yellow and red masses probably developed from the "aura" seen in type A (pl. XLV).

Pl. LVII, *b*, shows extreme simplification. The head and jaws are easily recognizable. The upper fang is attached to the jaw, but the lower fang is completely dissociated from it and springs from the base line. The body is entirely absent and the tail plumes are attached to the back of the head. A similar though more elaborate conception appears in pl. XXXI, and a more conventionalized aspect in fig. 52.



FIG. 52.—Conventionalized Serpent motive, Las Mercedes, Costa Rica.

This group shows close affiliation with portrayals of the plumed serpent found in Mexican art, of which we give an example (fig. 53) from the Island of



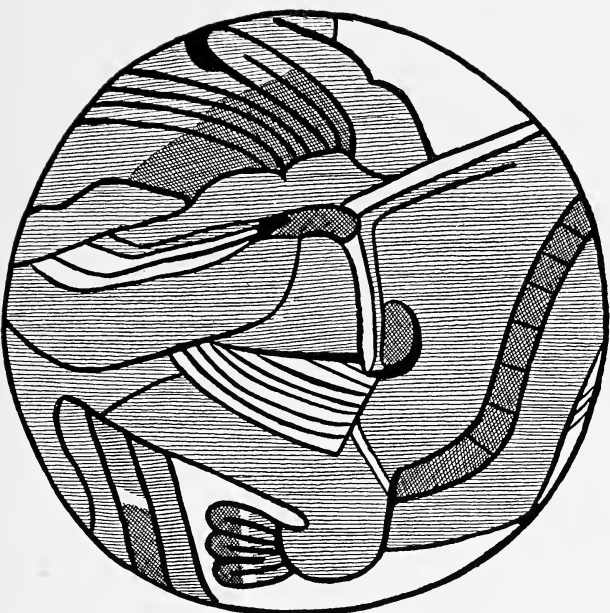
*a*



*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA  
(DIAMETER OF *a*, 9.5 IN.)





*a*



*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE F

*a*—COSTA RICA. *b*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA



Sacrificios, off Vera Cruz. This pattern is incised, but the arrangement is similar to that of the Pacific area.

PLUMED SERPENT—  
TYPE H

There is a rather uncommon motive found on the outer rims of globular bowls, which is derived from the Plumed Serpent. Examples of complete bowls of this type appear in pl. LIX, c,



FIG. 53.—Plumed Serpent pattern, Island of Sacrificios, Mexico. (Length, 5 in.)

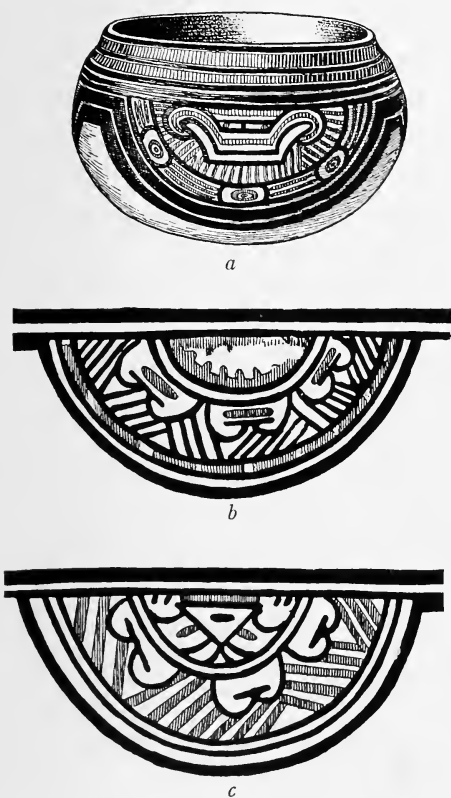


FIG. 54. — Conventionalized Serpent motive, type H. *a*, Tola, Nicaragua (diameter, 6 in.); *b*, *c*, Costa Rica.

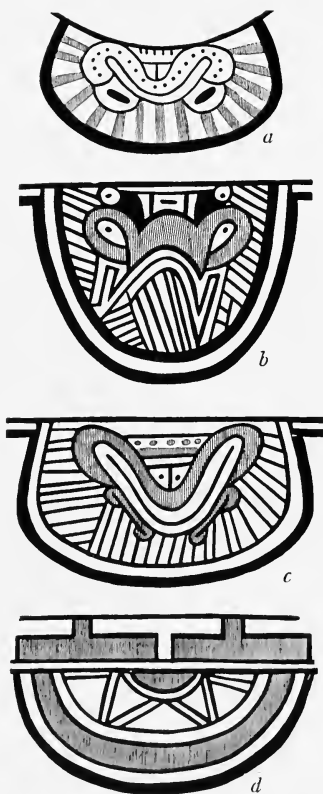


FIG. 55. — Conventionalized Serpent motive, type H. *a*, Filadelfia, Costa Rica; *b-d*, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica.

and fig. 54, *a*. Turning these bowls sideways, it will be observed that we obtain an outline of the serpent jaws in the central panel, which

can be verified by comparison with pl. XLVI, *a*. The rays surrounding the open jaws represent the plumes of the head. Fig. 55, *a*, again shows the open reptilian jaws with the eyes as an added element. The introduction in a profile view of two eyes or nostrils is the result of a primitive impulse found in other parts of the Americas,

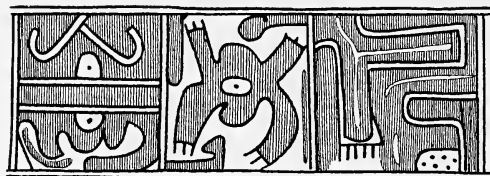
*a**b*

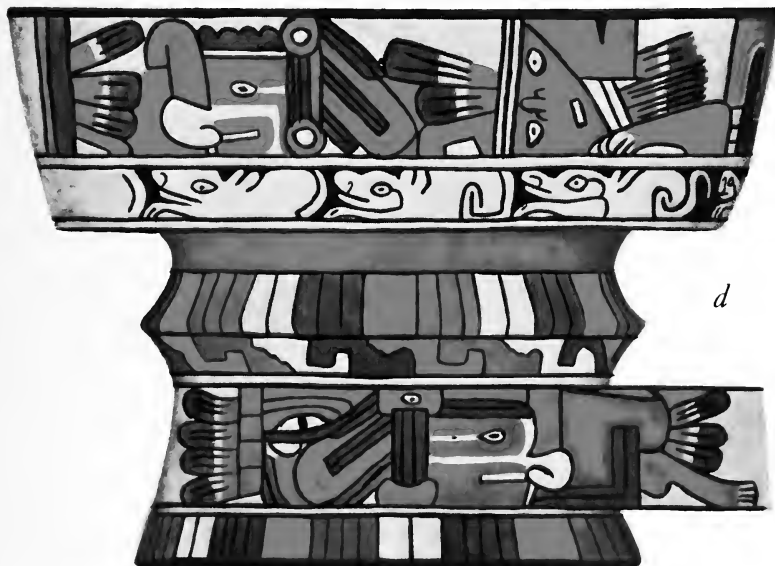
FIG. 56.—Conventionalized Serpent motive, type I, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica. (Diameter of *b*, 2.8 in.)

which calls for the portrayal of more of an animal than can be seen from a single point of view. This method of delineation reaches its highest development among the Indians of southern Alaska. It is also found among the Maya, and there are other examples in the area under discussion.

Fig. 55, *b*, is a similar though a more elaborate idea. In this case there are four elements like an eye. These may be compared with the eyes and nostrils seen in pl. XLVI, *a*, *c*, in which these two organs are shown in almost identical fashion. Fig. 55, *c*, introduces two hook-like appendages, which may be highly con-

ventionalized arms, but more probably are developed from scutes such as are seen in pl. LXV, *b*. Similar markings occur in fig. 54, *b*, *c*. In *b* the mouth is outlined by red scallops, which probably represent gums (pl. xc, *c*), while *c* has the triangular eye found in the Plumed Serpent of type E.

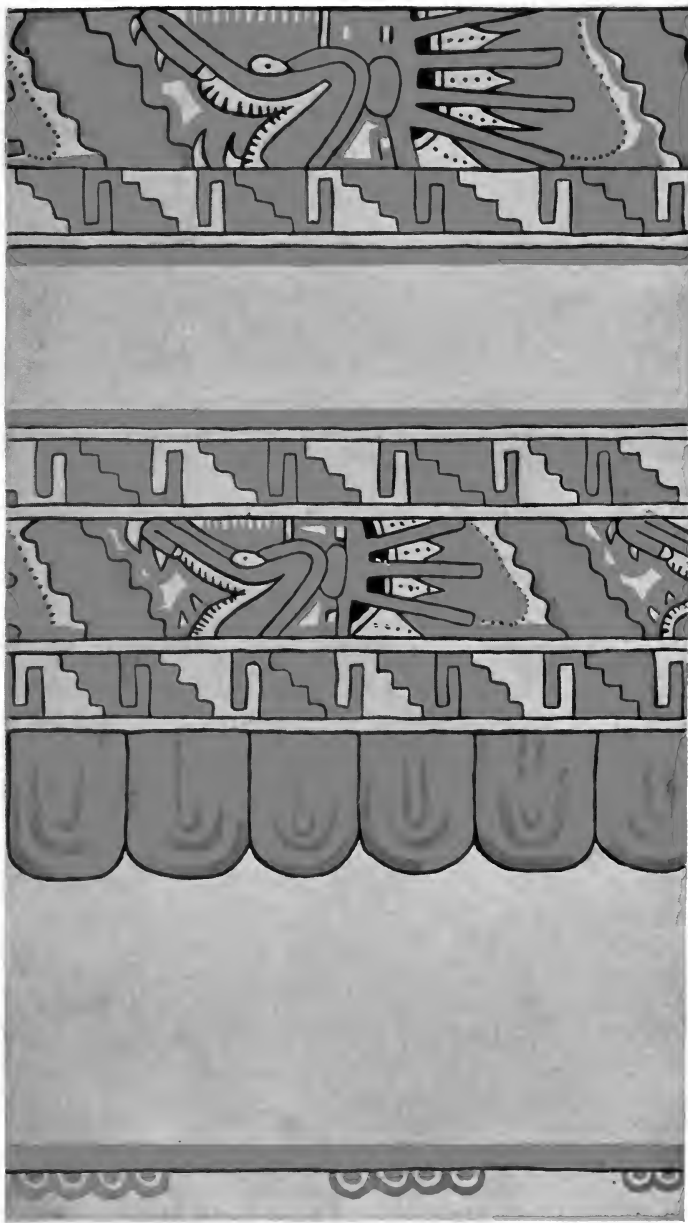
Fig. 55, *d*, shows a great simplification of parts, so that the design has become purely geometric.

*a**b**c**d*

## NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE

*c*—PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE F, COSTA RICA. *b*—PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE G, SANTA BARBARA, COSTA RICA  
*c*, *d*—TWO-HEADED MONSTER MOTIVE, TOLA, NICARAGUA; HEIGHT OF *d*, 4.5 IN.





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE G  
LAS MERCEDES, COSTA RICA



## PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE I

Fig. 56, *a*, shows a design derived from the Plumed Serpent by way of types B and E. Reference to pl. XLVII shows an example of type B consisting of the conventionalized head, plumes, body markings, and arms. In fig. 56, *a*, there is a not dissimilar conception in the central panel, while in the two wing panels we can see progressive degeneration of this form. Pl. LIX, *a*, presents another example, to which has been added a dotted outline, found in connection with type E (pls. LII, *a*, and LIII, *a*). Another, marked by serpentine curves surrounding the neck of a globular jar, is seen in pl. XLVIII, *c*. Finally, an elaborate example appears in fig. 56, *b*. This type of design extends into the Costa Rican Highlands, and it is sometimes used as a space filler in connection with other designs, of which an example occurs on the bird-wing of pl. xv, *c*.

## PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE J

In type I of the Plumed Serpent motive we saw great degeneration from the original prototype and the introduction of a new element in the dotted outline, but the preservation to a certain extent



FIG. 57.—Conventionalized Serpent motive, type J. *a*, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica; *b*, *c*, San Antonio de Nicoya, Costa Rica. (Diameters,  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. to 6 in.)

of the reptilian curves. In type J we come to a purely geometric pattern offering but little variation, found on the outer rims of bowls from the Nicoya peninsula and the neighboring Costa Rican Highland area.

Three examples shown in fig. 57 illustrate the range in pattern and the variation in shape. In *a* and *b* the dots form a series of zigzags, while in *c* the colored bands connect the outer lines of the panel.

## MEXICAN SERPENT HEADS

A single aspect of the serpent as portrayed in the art of Mexico is of importance to us, namely, the use of the serpent head to represent the day sign *coatl*, for somewhat similar heads have been found on pottery from Costa Rica. Fig. 58 shows a head for the day *coatl*



FIG. 58.—A Serpent head. (Codex Féjervary - Mayer.)

as seen in one of the Mexican codices. Particularly characteristic is the balancing of the design with the eye at the center and the prominent fang. The right-hand panel of pl. xxxvii, c, shows a very similar though simplified conception from Costa Rica, in which the lower jaw is omitted and there is a prominent tooth. From our historical knowledge one is inclined to associate the Costa Rican examples with the arrival of the Nicaraos in the fifteenth century.

## THE TWO-HEADED DRAGON

One of the characteristic designs of the Mayan Old Empire is known as the Two-headed Dragon. This monster has a body usually



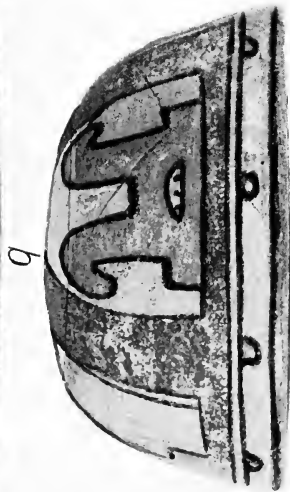
FIG. 59.—Two-headed Dragon on altar W', Copan. (Courtesy of Carnegie Institution of Washington.)

reptilian in character, legs with claws like a jaguar, and a head at either end. In fig. 59 we show an example from Copan, Honduras, on the side of an altar which bears the date 9.17.5.0.0, corresponding to 515 A.D. The left head apparently represents a jaguar, although the curled fangs associated with the serpent are present. The right head is that of the Long-nosed god in the guise of death.

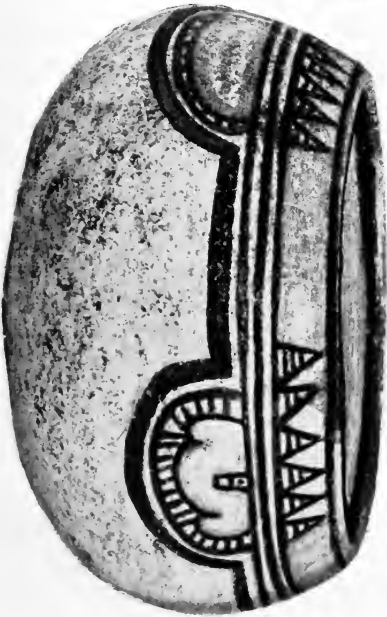
Pl. LVII, c, shows the treatment of this design in Nicaragua, as seen on the outer rim of a tripod bowl. As on the Copan altar an



a



b



c

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: DEGENERATE PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVES, TYPES H AND I  
a—CHILATE, NICARAGUA (HEIGHT, 5.25 IN.). b—NICARAGUA (DIAMETER, 5 IN.). c—ALTA GRACIA,  
NICARAGUA (DIAMETER, 6 IN.)



animal head faces to the left, from which issues a "speech scroll," a motive usually assumed not to have appeared in Middle American art until long after the downfall of the Mayan Old Empire. The body of the dragon is arched like the tail of the Pacific area Jaguar motive (pl. xxxv, *a*), and flanked by cross-hatchings such as mark

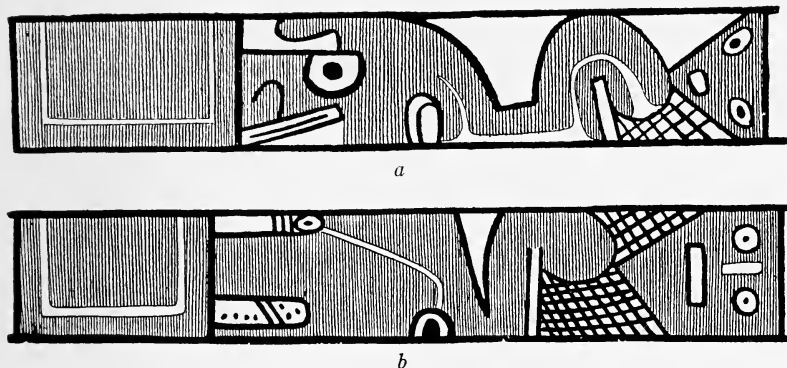


FIG. 60.—Two-headed Dragon on bowl rims, Tola, Nicaragua.

the body of the Plumed Serpent (pl. XLVI, *a*). The head at the right is presented full face. This position was portrayed also by the Maya, for instance at Quirigua. The staring eyes and open mouth suggest a skull, like many of the Maya examples.

Fig. 60, *a*, *b*, show progressive conventionalization of the animal head, together with very little variation of the right head. This change reaches a climax in pl. LX, *c*, in which the lower jaw has been entirely eliminated. The eye is suspended from the upper jaw. Near the angle of the jaw and attached to the base are concentric semi-circles, which are seen on the necks of the previous examples and may represent the shoulder. The body is no longer arched and has become purely geometric.

Pl. LVII, *d*, is a most unusual specimen from southern Nicaragua (fig. 61). The base is round and forms a rattle, while the vessel itself is squarish. The upper band of the decoration is a variant of the Two-headed Dragon motive, in which the right head is of the type already described. The left head, however, belongs with the design previously described as the Plumed Serpent, type C (pl. XLIX, *c*). A similar head appears on the base, the whole pattern obviously falling in the Plumed Serpent C group. The second zone from the top con-

tains a motive described on pages 143-145 as the Silhouette Jaguar, type B.

The Two-headed Dragon pattern is of restricted distribution, for it is found chiefly on the Isthmus of Rivas in territory occupied by the Nicaraos at the time of the conquest. It is, however, definitely linked (fig. 61) with designs of much more extended provenience.



FIG. 61.—Two-headed Dragon, Silhouette Jaguar of type B, and Conventionalized Serpent motive. type C; Tola, Nicaragua. (Height, 4.5 in.)

*a**b**c*

## NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE

*a*—MONKEY MOTIVE, TYPE A, AGUA CALIENTE, COSTA RICA. *b*—MONKEY MOTIVE, TYPE A, NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA *c*—TWO-HEADED MONSTER PATTERN, NICARAGUA. HEIGHT OF *a*, 5.25 IN.



## CHAPTER VII

### NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: PAINTED DECORATION—*Continued*

#### THE MONKEY—TYPE A

THE monkey is one of the important motives of the ceramic art of the Pacific region. The simplest manner of presentation is shown in pl. LX, *a*. The characteristic features are the square head with projecting jaws, from which issues a speech scroll. This symbol is highly characteristic of Mexico from Toltec times onward, and its presence here makes it probable that this group dates from after the arrival of the Nicaraos. The crest of the animal has been transferred to the back of the head, and together with the tail tends to balance the arm and the speech scroll. The species depicted is *Alouatta pallerosus*.

Pl. LX, *b*, shows a very similar example. It is noteworthy that in both *a* and *b* the monkey is accompanied by a banner-like motive which we have already seen in connection with the feathered serpent (pl. XLIX, *d*). In this case it is accompanied by cross-hatched areas suggesting the serpent body markings, between which is a motive suggestive of feathers. In *b* the speech scroll is attached to the top of the nose, where it is also frequently found in other examples.

Pl. LXI and fig. 62 show a slightly different presentation. The monkey is no longer seated, but stands with the head turned to the left as usual, a posture which exposes all four limbs to view. The square head and speech scroll are again in evidence, and there is also a new feature, namely, two rosettes, one attached to each side

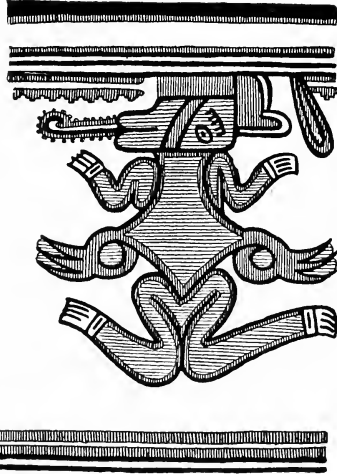


FIG. 62.—Monkey motive, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica.

of the body. These are similar to the rosettes seen with the human figure (fig. 39) and elsewhere. It is noteworthy that in pl. LXI the edge of the disc is represented by scallops containing dots, and in fig. 62 by plumes. This variation occurs also in the tail plumes of the Plumed Serpent, type A (pls. XLIV, *a*, and XLV, *a*); probably the motive represents feathers, in this case perhaps attached to a shield.

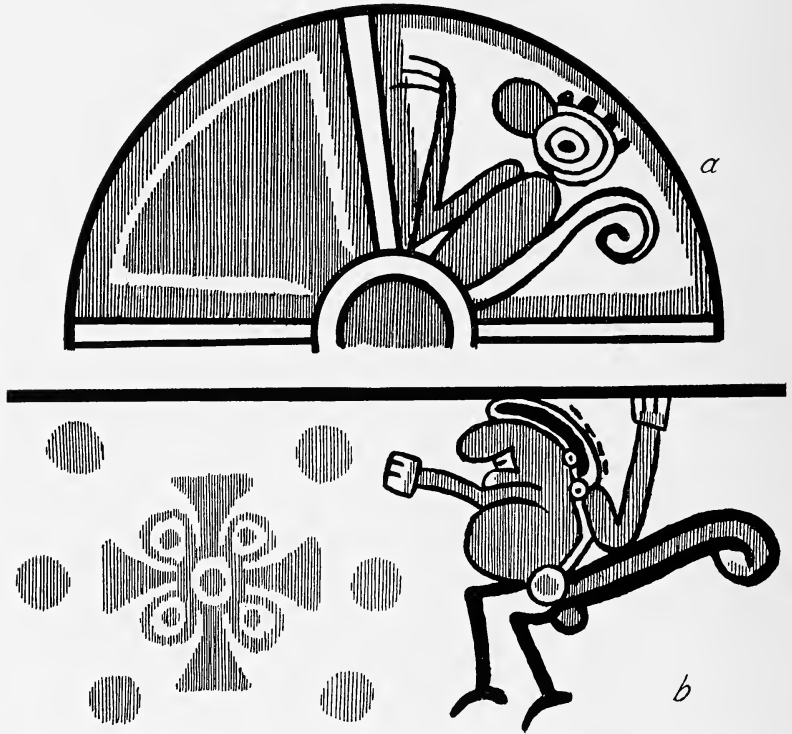


FIG. 63.—Monkey patterns, type A, Santa Helena, Nicaragua. (Diameter of *a*, 4.5 in.)

A most complicated example appears in pl. LXII. The essential features which we have emphasized—the square head, the crest, and the speech scroll—are again present. The shields with attached feathers are also found, one united with the left arm and the other with the tail. The body has the cross-hatchings characteristic of the Plumed Serpent, to which, especially to types A and C, the Monkey of type A is closely related. However, the animal here portrayed



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MONKEY PATTERN, TYPE A  
NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

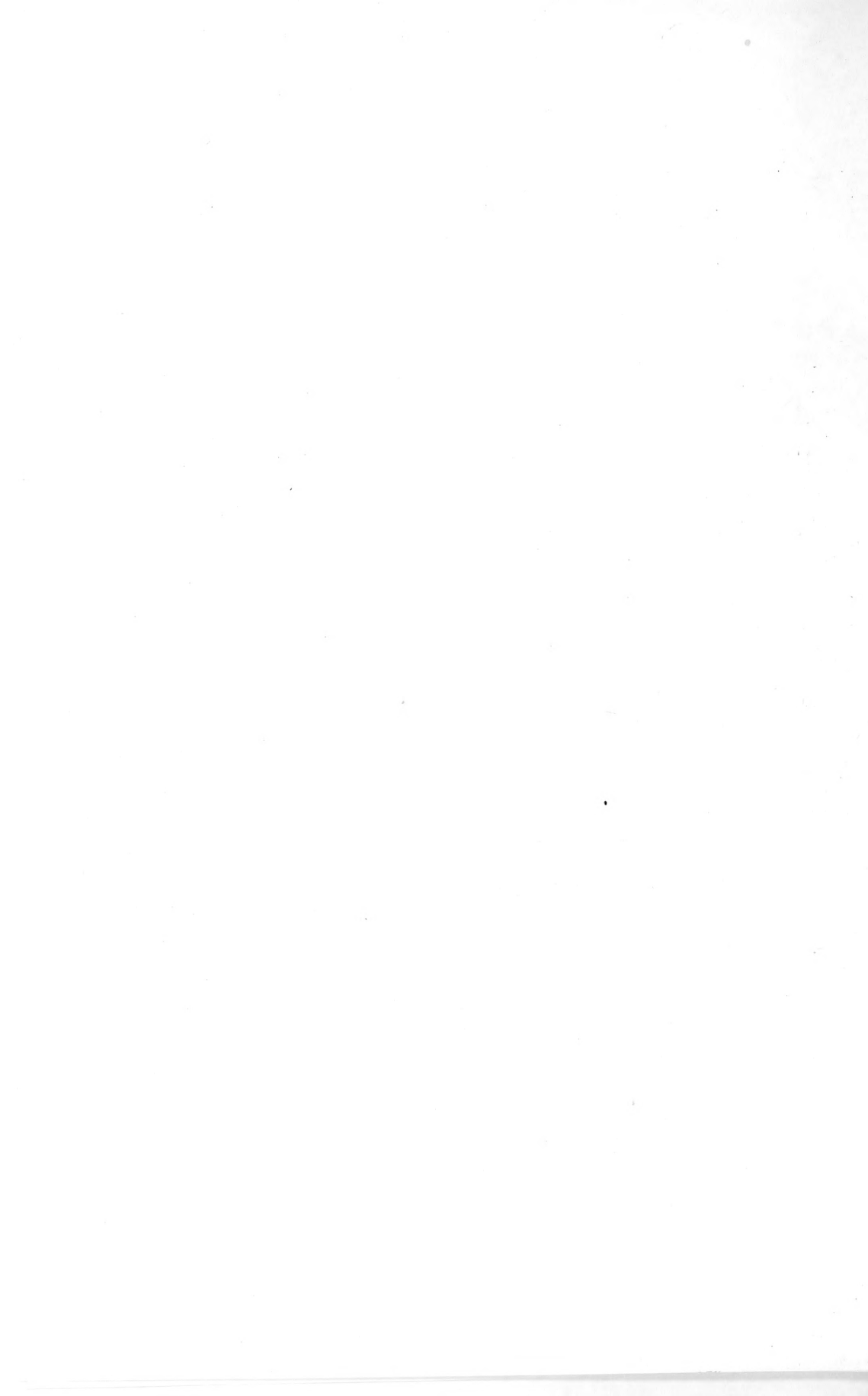
HEIGHT, 9.5 IN.

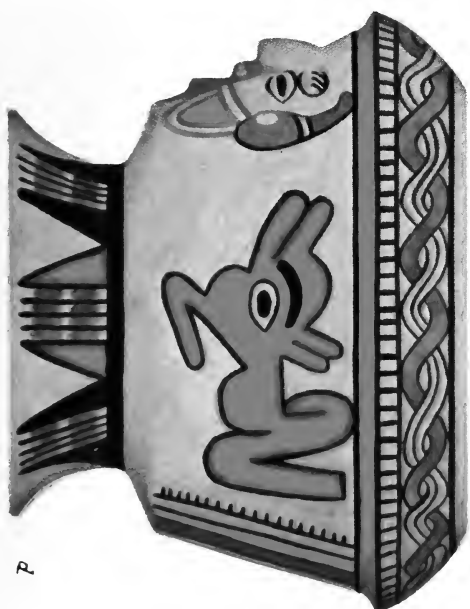
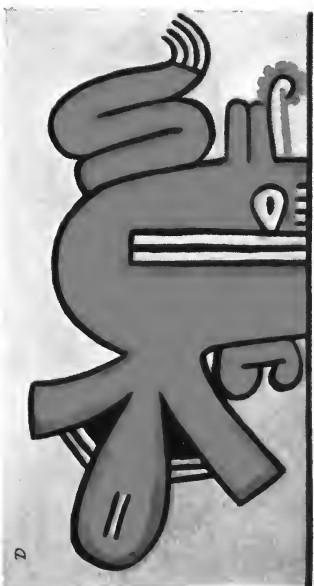
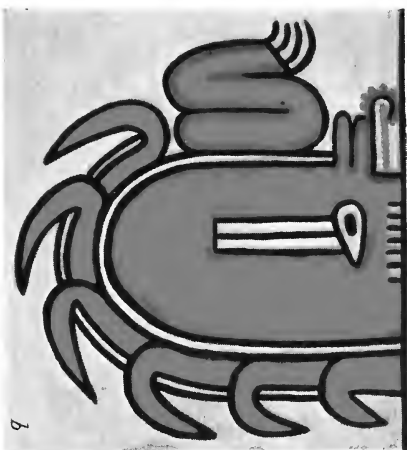




NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MONKEY PATTERN, TYPE A  
NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

HEIGHT, 9 IN





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MONKEY PATTERNS. TYPE B. COSTA RICA

HEIGHT OF *d*, 5.5 IN.



admits of no other identification than as a monkey, and the species can be stated with confidence as *Alouatta pallerosus* or *myctes*, which is still present in large numbers in the Peninsula of Nicoya.

Two features in this design call for special comment. In the first place we have already seen the speech scroll transferred from the mouth to the nose (pl. LX, *b*). In the example before us there are two speech scrolls, one attached to the head plumes and the other issuing from the mouth, a circumstance illustrative of the constant tendency in primitive art toward conventionalization through the reduplication of parts. A further point of more general interest is the object beneath the arm, which apparently is a feathered arrow driven home in the breast. If we can accept it as such, it offers a close parallel to the Mexican codices, in which the conquered towns are represented by their proper hieroglyph with an arrow driven through it.

Fig. 63, *a*, *b*, shows simplified Monkey forms from the region of Lake Nicaragua, which are to be regarded as a local variant of type A. In conjunction with the monkey in fig. 63, *b*, are a series of large red dots which also appear with certain representations of the jaguar (pl. xxxv, *b*). In the center of these dots is a cross which perhaps is connected with the painted designs seen on the modeled-painted face group (pl. xxii, *a*).

#### THE MONKEY—TYPE B

We now are ready to follow a series of changes in the Monkey pattern, which, while not so complex, are comparable with those we have witnessed in the Plumed Serpent. The group now to be discussed can scarcely be called a fixed type, for it combines parts of the Monkey, the Alligator, and the Plumed Serpent, yet designs embodying in varying proportions all these elements are of such frequent occurrence that it seems best to isolate them rather than to treat them according to the preponderant characteristics of each pattern.

Transitional steps from the forms considered are seen in pl. LXIII. Thus *b* shows a figure with the square monkey head, projecting jaws, and speech scroll. In addition, there is a larged plumed tail obviously of the type seen in the Plumed Serpent, type A. Pl. LXIII, *c*, presents a monster with jaws similar to those of *b*, but without the speech scroll. The head is capped by scales and the tail ends in a plume. The next illustration, pl. LXIII, *d*, is a pattern showing many of the features of the Alligator which is considered in detail else-

where (pl. LXXV). Returning again to pl. LXIII, we find on comparison of *b* and *a* that the square head, speech scroll, arm, and body are similar. However, in the former illustration the body is surrounded by a series of hooks which are a regular method of showing alligator and serpent scales in the Mexican codices.

Pl. LXIV portrays a monster with the monkey head and speech scroll. The body is outlined by the Mexican form of serpent scute, and is decorated by cross-hatched areas like those of the feathered serpent, while the tail ends in a plume. Pl. LXV, *a*, is a similar pattern found on the surface of a tripod plate, the outlines being somewhat restored. Again the monkey head and speech scroll appear in conjunction with the serpent body and the Mexican alligator scutes, and there is an added excrescence under the arm covered by serpent-like markings.

Pl. LXV, *b*, shows a monster with the serpent head. The cross-hatching has been transferred from the body to the head plumes (cf. pl. XLVI, *b*, where the cross-hatching comes in the mouth). The body is marked by triangles in alternate colors, suggestive of pl. LXI, and terminates in four large plumes. Between these plumes and the arm, in a tear-shape panel, we find the speech scroll of the monkey! No finer example can be adduced of conventionalism in art through the transference of units from one pattern to another.

#### THE MONKEY—TYPE C

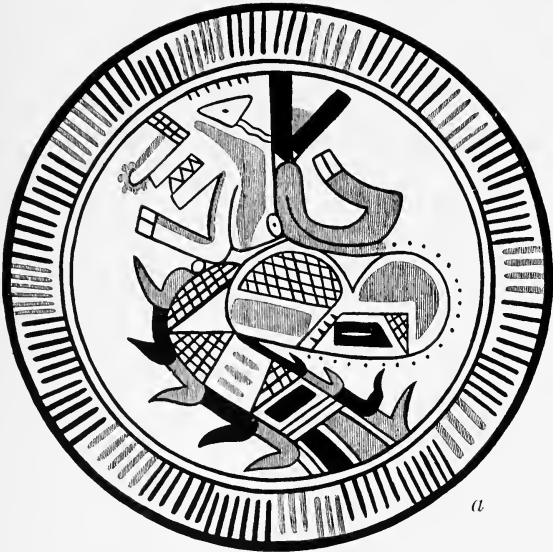
A group of not great importance numerically, but of interest from the point of view of design development, is represented by the pattern of pl. LXVI, in which we can see the square head and speech scroll associated with the monkey. It displays a posture comparable with that of the Monkey of type A (pl. LXI), and even has small tags attached to the corners of the body similar to the plumes seen in type A. On the other hand, this pattern is obviously similar to the figures we have seen develop from the Plumed Serpent of type E, of which two examples are given in pl. LV. This resemblance is particularly marked in the legs of pl. LXVI, *a*, and in the parallel lines flanking a row of dots.

The evolution of the Plumed Serpent through a geometric motive to the Monkey, type C, we have discussed (see page 154). However, we shall again emphasize that the question of time does not enter into such developments, and it is therefore highly venturesome

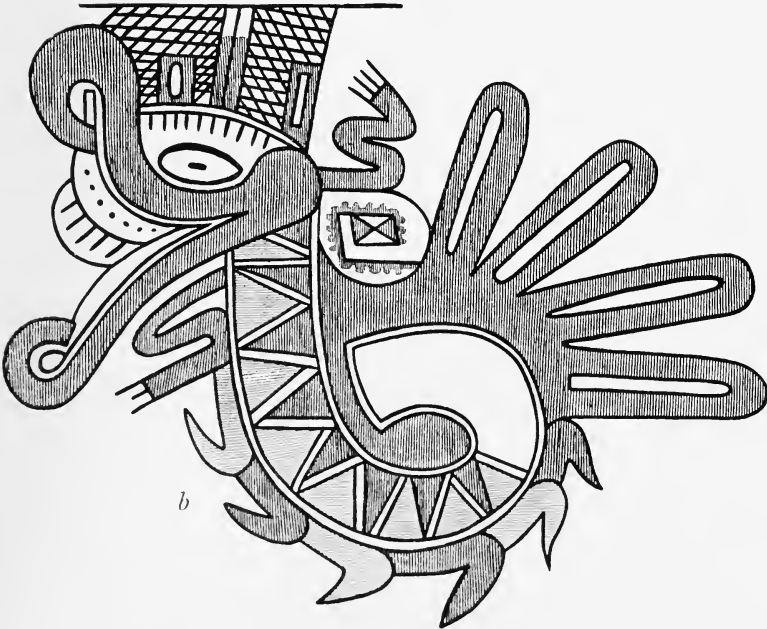


NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MONKEY PATTERN, TYPE B  
NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA





a



b

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MONKEY PATTERN, TYPE B. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA  
(DIAMETER OF *a*, 6.3 IN.)





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MONKEY PATTERN, TYPE C. COSTA RICA

DIAMETER OF *a*, 4.5 IN.



to lay down theories on the development of designs without the evidence of stratigraphy revealed by excavation, for this alone can throw units into certain chronological sequence.

### THE MONKEY—TYPE D

The form of monkey, of which the simplest representation appears in pl. LXVII, plainly is derived from the almost identical type encountered on early Maya pottery remains from such sites as Copan and the Ulua valley, and found also on pottery stamps from the Mayan and Mexican areas. The monkey of pl. LXVII is associated with a pattern representing the jaguar. This particular specimen is in the National Museum of Costa Rica. Hartman (1901, pl. 35) recovered an almost identical bowl at Chircot in the Costa Rican Highlands.

Fig. 64, *a*, is a similar monkey design covering the entire interior of a bowl. The background is largely filled with red in a manner suggestive of the black filled Polychrome patterns (pl. LXXVII). Fig. 64, *b*, shows two monkeys placed back to back, and pl. LXVIII, *c*, consists of a complex made up of four heads and two bodies, the whole so assembled as to suggest some strange insect. These three specimens well exemplify the extreme ease and rapidity with which designs may be radically altered.

Fig. 65 illustrates a large jar from El General, a site in southern Costa Rica. The body of the vessel is red, and around the neck is a



FIG. 64.—Monkey patterns, type D.  
*a*, Filadelfia, Costa Rica (width, 8.5 in.);  
*b*, Nicoya peninsula (width, 4.5 in.).



FIG. 65.—Jar with Monkey pattern from General, Costa Rica. (Height, 11.5 in.)

band of white upon which appears a black pattern similar to the Monkey of type D, but more directly affiliated with the Alligator motive of Chiriqui.

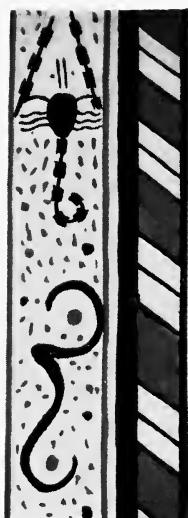
#### THE MONKEY—TYPE E

Pl. LXIX displays a monkey of which the head is modeled in relief, while the body is indicated in paint. The conception belongs primarily to the Maya, and the example illustrated may well have been an object of aboriginal trade, although the nature of the paint suggests that it is of local origin. Among the Maya this form of vase, of which we give an example in fig. 66, has been found in the Ulua valley. It occurs also in Salvador in examples almost identical with pl. LXIX. Cylindrical jars with short, oval, tripod legs pertain

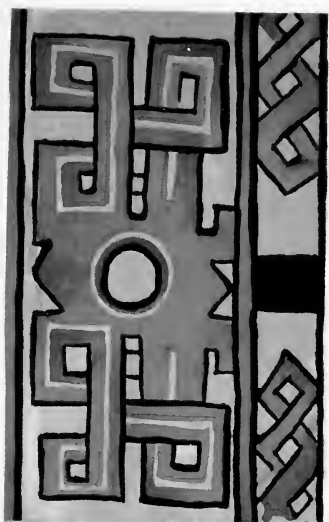


NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MONKEY MOTIVE, TYPE D, AND JAGUAR PATTERN, TYPE D  
COSTA RICA





a



b



c

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE. COSTA RICA

a—SCORPION PATTERN. b—ALLIGATOR PATTERN, TYPE A. c—MONKEY PATTERN, TYPE D, DIAMETER, 5.5 IN.





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: MONKEY PATTERN, TYPE E, COSTA RICA

HEIGHT, 7 IN.



primarily to the Old Empire, and vessels of this type were not made by the Maya in later times.

### THE CRAB

The creature seen in pl. LXX, *b*, can be identified with some certainty as the land crab (*Geocarcinus*). The elements depicted are the body, eyes, mouth, feelers, legs (of which there should be and are four), and the tail (which is curved underneath the body in life). A very similar figure rendered in different colors appears in *a* of the same plate. The parts shown are the same as in the other example, except the feelers, which have



FIG. 66—Fragment of jar with monkey head, Uluá valley, Honduras. (Height, 6.5 in.)

been replaced by three rectangles filled with red. Fig. 67, *a*, introduces a different treatment of the head, mouth, and feelers, the last feature being turned at an angle of ninety degrees. Pl. LXXI, *a*, shows a more conventionalized example, in which the claws have become hooks and the head and mouth are treated in a different manner. In *b* the claws and multiple legs have been replaced by two pairs of legs of the type usually seen in the Nicoya Polychrome Ware.

Up to this point no radical changes have occurred. The next specimen (pl. LXXII, *a*), however, introduces a new set of elements in the eyes, nose, and mouth, which have been placed on the back. The creature is still distinctly a crab, which retains the crab claws and possesses a second pair of eyes in the proper position. In fig. 67, *b*, these parts have disappeared, resulting in a circular red object in the center of which are eyes, eyebrows, and nose; at the sides are the remnants of the claws, now become ears; at the base is the tail, now become a mouth; on top are the feelers, forming a head-dress.

The resemblance to a face is even more striking in pl. LXXIII, *a*, a pattern covering the base of a bowl the sides of which are decorated with the frieze of human figures illustrated in pl. XLVIII, *b*.



FIG. 67.—Crab motive. *a*, Costa Rica (diameter, 6.5 in.);  
*b*, Ometepe island, Nicaragua (diameter, 6 in.).

The relation of this form to the original crab type is easily seen by comparison with pl. LXXI, *a*, and fig. 67, *b*. However, not a single one of the features marking the original crab type is present.



NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: CRAB MOTIVE. COSTA RICA

DIAMETER OF *a*, 7 IN.





NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: CRAB MOTIVE. COSTA RICA

DIAMETER OF *a*, 5.5 IN.





*a*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE. SANTA HELENA, NICARAGUA

*a*—CRAB MOTIVE (DIAMETER, 5.5 IN.). *b*—SCORPION MOTIVE (DIAMETER, 6.5 IN.)



*b*



Yet another radical change is seen in the pattern in pl. LXXIII, *b*, which represents a figure closely resembling the Crab god of Chiriquian goldwork (fig. 68.) The connection between this deity and the crab is more obvious than in the preceding specimen. Thus the feelers have become the head-dress; the claws, which are similar to those of pl. LXXI, *a*, form the arms. The curved rear edge of the shell now forms the chin. The crab legs, curiously enough, are preserved, but do not form the legs of the deity, which have developed from the crab tail.

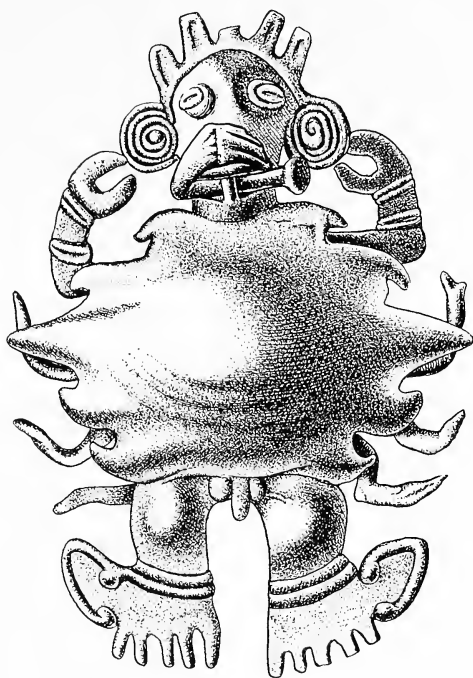


FIG. 68.—Gold image of the Crab god of Chiriqui.  
(After MacCurdy, 1911.)

The crab design is commonly found from Lake Nicaragua southward to the Nicoya peninsula. More rarely it occurs in the Costa Rican Highlands. It is always depicted on the bottom of bowls, and, unlike most of the motives of this region, was never modified into a rim pattern. On the Peruvian coast, especially in the Chicama region, there is a well-developed crab motive which exactly parallels that described here. Identical features include the tail which is unwrapped from the body, and the human face on the back which develops into a Crab god.

### THE SCORPION

An uncommon but easily recognized motive found on Nicoya Polychrome Ware bowls is the scorpion. The example in pl. LXVIII, *a*, shows the usual color scheme. The animal is drawn with claws extended before the body, and the tail, which contains the stinging

apparatus, twisted to the side. The zone in which the scorpion is painted almost always is covered with red dots, as seen in this specimen, and the alternating bands of white and red at the top also usually go with this design. To the right of the scorpion is a curious double hook.

Pl. LXXIV, *c*, depicts a very elongate scorpion with two sets of tails. To the left of the scorpion a double hook again appears, slightly different from the preceding example. In *a* of the same plate is introduced a new element—a conventionalized head. In pl. LXXII, *b*, the double hook is absent, but the head is present and appears to be that of a man whose arm and feather head-dress can be seen.

From these examples it is evident that the scorpion does not characteristically appear alone, but is always associated with either one of two forms of a double hook or with a human head. Such linked designs are often important, for their study makes it possible to assemble patterns in family groups. A connection of this kind is shown in pl. LXXIV, *b*, where the double-hook motive can be seen in association with an example of the Plumed Serpent, type D.

The scorpion pattern appears only on the inner rims of bowls. It is not a common motive, but is found most frequently in southern Nicaragua and it also occurs in the Nicoya peninsula. A scorpion motive is found in the pottery of Moche in Peru.

#### THE ALLIGATOR—TYPE A

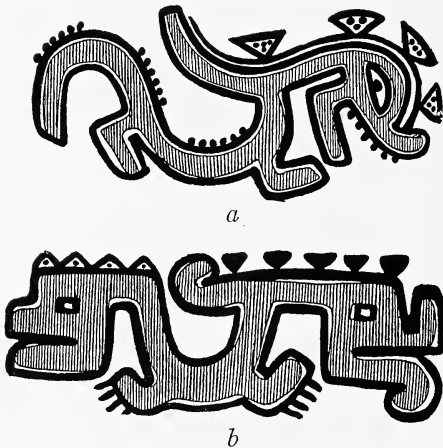


FIG. 69.—Chiriqui Alligator motive. (Length of *b*, 4.75 in. After MacCurdy, 1911.)

The alligator, or crocodile, enters more or less prominently into the art of all parts of Middle America, although it achieves its greatest importance in Chiriqui, where it is the dominant motive of the ordinary painted ware, so much so, indeed, that this class of pottery is usually known as "Alligator Ware". The standard presentation of this animal in Chiriqui, as shown in fig. 69, is marked by the open jaws, upturned snout, the



*a*

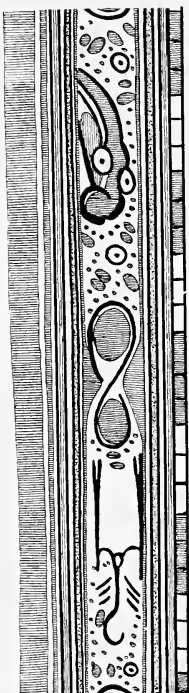


*b*

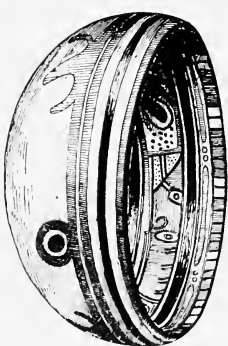
NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: CRAB MOTIVE

*a*—SANTA HELENA, NICARAGUA. *b*—COSTA RICA

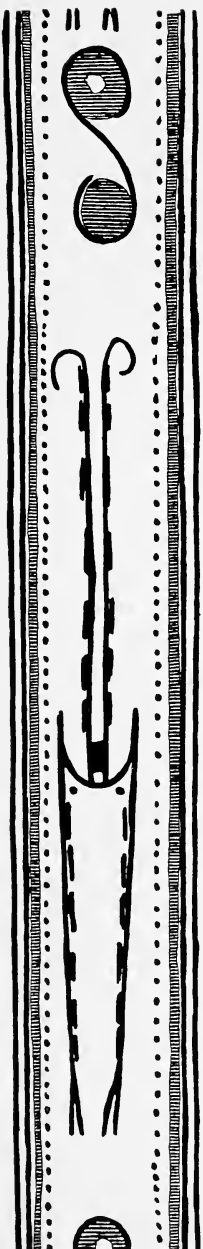




*a*



*b*



*c*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: SCORPION MOTIVE

*a*—MOYOGALPA, NICARAGUA. *b*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA. *c*—COSTA RICA



long crest at the back of the head, and the transference of the triangular scales to the edge of the pattern. We are not here concerned with the multifarious aspects in which this design appears in Chiriqui, for a full exposition of which the reader is referred to the works of MacCurdy (1911) and Holmes (1888). We wish to point out, however, that the Plumed Serpent motive, identifiable as such, is absent from the art of Chiriqui, where its place in the religious symbolism is taken by the alligator. In view of the fact that the Alligator motive blends with the jaguar-serpent-bird complex in Peru (fig. 284), the writer believes that some idea of the serpent underlies the Chiriqui patterns and that the otherwise inexplicable crests in reality are plumes such as appear on the Feathered Serpent patterns of Nicoya Polychrome Ware.

The alligator appears in the Pacific area in forms very close to its Chiriqui prototype, but goes through an independent series of modifications. One of the Chiriqui variants, however, is not uncommon in Nicoya, and is the dominant motive on the pottery from El Veinte Siete de Abril (fig. 70).

Pl. LXXV, *c*, shows a pattern which preserves many of the features of the Chiriqui Alligator motive (fig. 69), particularly the general curve



FIG. 70.—Chiriqui Alligator scute pattern, Costa Rica. (Diameter, 4 in.)

of the body and the arrangement of the scutes on the outer edge of the pattern. The bowl in fig. 71, *b*, is decorated with one incised and two painted bands. The upper painted band contains a representation of the alligator marked by the same treatment of the body, legs, scutes, etc., but with a very greatly prolonged jaw, the end of which turns over upon itself. We must trace this recurved jaw through a long and complex course.

Fig. 71, *a*, shows a related pattern of rectangular character. The eye may be seen near the center, to the right of which is the jaw. In fig. 72, *d*, the body and legs are like those of fig. 71, *b*, but the jaw has developed into a pattern suggestive of basketry. In pl. LXVIII, *b* (which must be turned upside down to be seen properly—a feature found elsewhere in this region), it will be noted that the design consists of two interlaced patterns like the jaw of fig. 72, *d*. These motives flank a circle which probably represents an eye. At the bot-

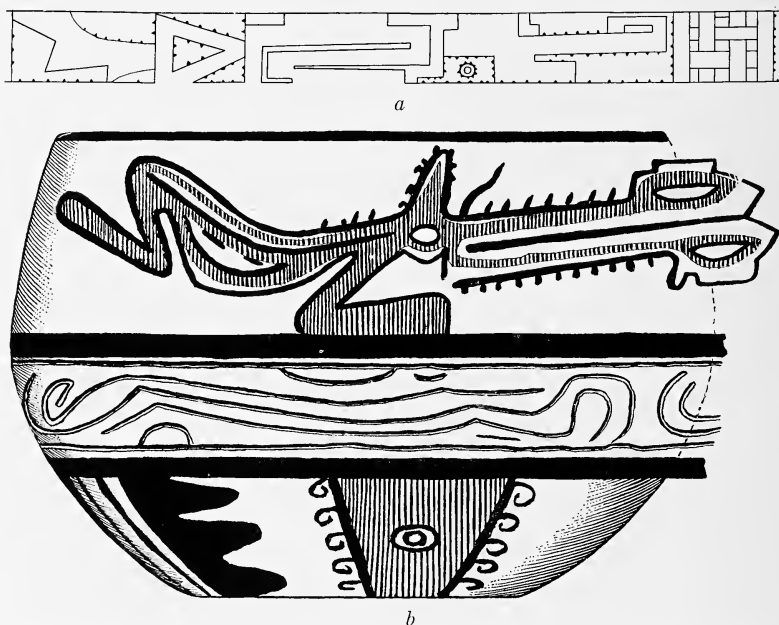
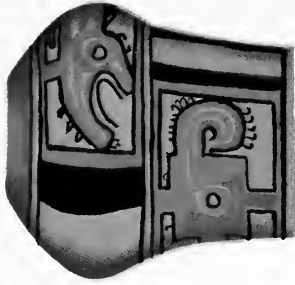


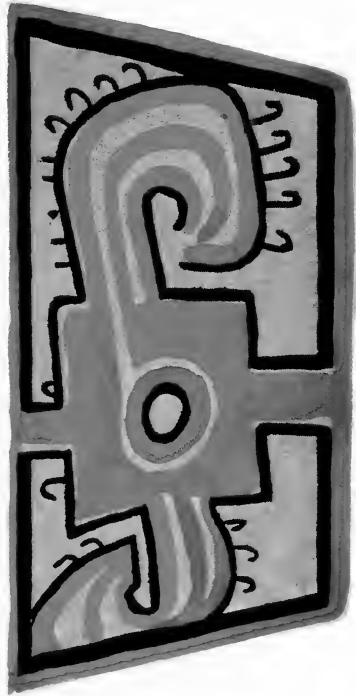
FIG. 71.—Nicoya Polychrome Ware: Alligator motive. *a*, Santana, Costa Rica (length, 15 in.); *b*, Rivas, Nicaragua (diameter, 6.75 in.).

tom of the pattern, i.e., toward the top of the plate, is a V-shape projection flanked by two L-shape objects. These represent the body and legs of the alligator more or less as seen in previous examples (pl. LXXV, *c*). The double-headed alligator is a common motive in Chiriqui (fig. 69, *b*).

The patterns now to be discussed are derived not directly from the alligator itself but from the interlaced motive which we have seen develop from the alligator jaw. Fig. 72, *a*, is a small cup. On each side of the rim are frets of this type which are connected by a band



a



b



c



running across the base of the vessel. Appended to this band are black triangles which recall the treatment of the scutes on Chiriqui specimens (fig. 69). Fig. 73, *d*, shows a rectangular pattern at the ends of which are widely open jaws with recurved snouts comparable to those of fig. 71, *a*. Fig. 73, *a*, is an effigy vessel across the face of which is painted a simplified rendering of the design in *d*. Fig. 72, *c*, has a pattern composed of two such designs placed back to back. Fig. 72, *b*, and pl. LXXV, *b*, both show other variants of this phase.



FIG. 72.—Alligator motive. *a-c*, Costa Rica; *d*, Bolson, Costa Rica. (Diameters, 3 in. to 5 in.)

Fig. 73, *c*, and the pattern from the opposite side of the same vessel seen in *b*, both show designs which seem to develop from those just considered, but which have no apparent direct relation to the initial forms of this design group. However, these patterns and all the others which have been placed in this series are unified not only by the progressive modification of outlines, but also by the interior filling of the patterns, which has consisted not of solid color but of alternated red and white bands. Such alternation of colors persists in the specimens seen in fig. 74, which, perhaps, it is overstraining a

point to place in this series at all. However, there is another connecting link, for it will be noted that the central cross-like element of *a* is built up from a series of frets which closely resemble the recurved alligator snout (cf. fig. 71, *a*).

Frets of this kind sometimes occur as an independent motive. An example of this appears in fig. 75, *a*, a vessel which has retained the

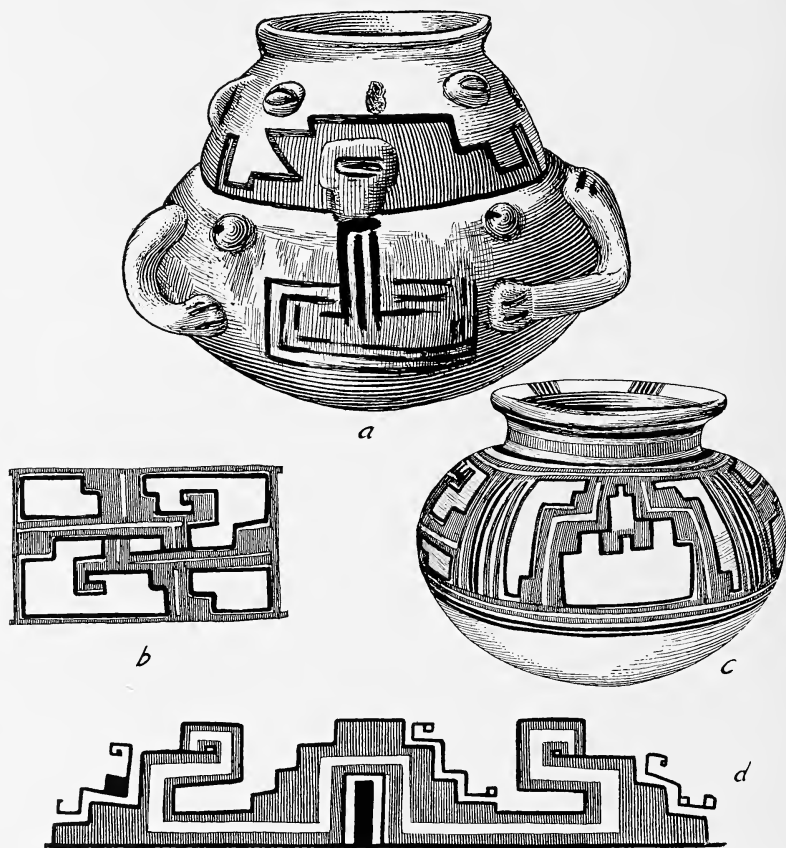


FIG. 73.—Alligator derivatives. *a-c*, Nicoya peninsula; *d*, Filadelfia, Costa Rica.

original luster of its varnish to an unusual degree. The pattern here consists of two recurved snouts turned in opposite directions. Fig. 76 is another variant, in which the long axis is vertical instead of horizontal. The circle in the center probably represents an eye. This



*a*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: SILHOUETTE ALLIGATOR MOTIVE. COSTA RICA  
(DIAMETER OF *a*, 8.5 IN.)



*b*



pattern should be compared with pl. LXVIII, *b*. Pl. LXXV, *b*, is very similar to fig. 76, but with a horizontal axis. This pattern appears on the same vessel as the pattern with which our study of the series commenced, showing conclusively that this entire range of design existed at one time, while the unity of treatment seen in pl. LXXV suggests that the maker was consciously dealing with two well recognized variants of the same subject.

The Alligator motive of type A occurs on the exterior rims of bowls and jars, and occasionally, in geometric modifications, on the interior of dishes. It is found in southern Nicaragua and the Nicoya peninsula, particularly in the region of Panamá bay at Sardinal. Bransford (1882, p. 823) states that in passing through this region he encountered a party of Indians from Panama who had come there to fish for pearls. Possibly this was an annual custom antedating the arrival of the Spaniards, and the centering of the Alligator motive in this region may perhaps be thus explained.

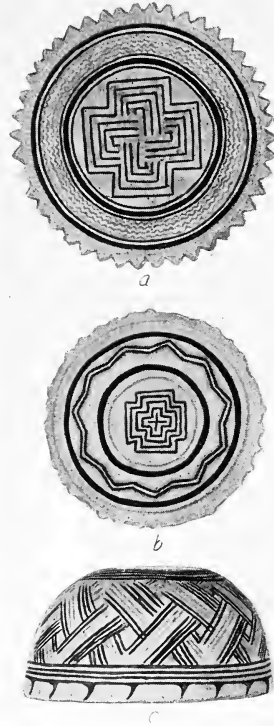


FIG. 74.—Basket patterns allied to the Alligator motive, Nicoya peninsula. (Diameter of *a*, 8.25 in.)

### SILHOUETTE ALLIGATOR

A second group of patterns for which the alligator furnishes the dominant motive is typically found on the bottom of shallow bowls whose background is filled with black somewhat in the manner already seen in connection with the Silhouette Jaguar. The examples illustrated in pl. LXXVI, *a*, and fig. 77, *a*, show a clear connection with the simpler forms of the Chiriquian and the Nicoya Alligator motive.

Fig. 77, *b*, represents two alligators placed back-to-back and con-

nected by their tails. The bottom figure has been but little modified, while the upper one has been reduced to a head with curiously dis-



*a*



*b*

FIG. 75.—Patterns derived from the Alligator motive. *a*, Culebra, Costa Rica; *b*, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica. (Diameter of *a*, 4 in.)

torted jaws. This pattern leads to pl. LXXVII, *a*, which can be identified as the "Alligator god," so commonly represented in Chiriqui goldwork, of which an example is given in pl. LXXVIII, *a*.



*a*



*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE, ALLIGATOR GOD. NICOYA PENINSULA,  
COSTA RICA

DIAMETER OF *b*, 7 IN.



The Alligator god is a monster possessing a human body and extremities, and the head of an alligator, the latter marked by the large jaws and teeth characteristic of that animal. Often the head is framed by ears which are probably supplementary reptilian heads shown in profile. The design of pl. LXXVII, *a*, is a somewhat conventionalized representation of this idea. A curious feature is the treatment of the hands, which are composed of alligator heads.

Pl. LXXVII, *b*, shows a breaking-up of the Alligator god into a

geometric pattern, in which the four legs are represented attached to the corners of a rectangular body, to which the face has been transferred. In pl. LXXIX, *b*, the motive has become completely geometric, and a different geometric pattern of similar origin is seen in pl. LXXVI, *b*.

A double-headed Alligator motive is seen in fig 78, *b*. This is not a common variant, and the example presented is also unusual as it comes from the exterior of a tall vase. The background is not filled with solid black, but there is a mere suggestion of such treatment. Fig. 78, *a*, shows a motive which may be related to *b*; it is taken from the interior of a cup.

The use of a black, or, more rarely, a red background to set off the princi-



FIG. 76. — Pattern derived from the Alligator motive, Las Guacas, Costa Rica.



FIG. 77.—Silhouette Alligator motive, Nicoya peninsula. (Diameter of *b*, 8.5 in.)

pal motive occurs not only in this region, but extends northward into Guatemala and Mexico. It is found on Copan pottery, most notably on a cylindrical vase ornamented with a painting of the quetzal, so this manner of treatment of designs in Central America must be as early as the sixth century A. D. The greatest development of this technic in Central America centers in the Nicoya peninsula. The Silhouette Alligator is a not uncommon motive there, and it is also found, though with less frequency, in the western Costa Rican Highlands. The resemblance of black backgrounds to negative painting has already been discussed (page 144).

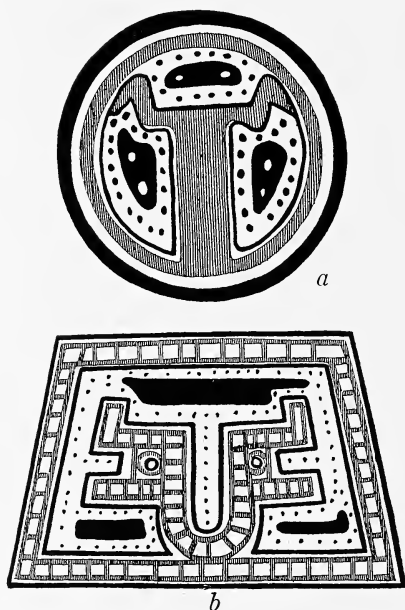


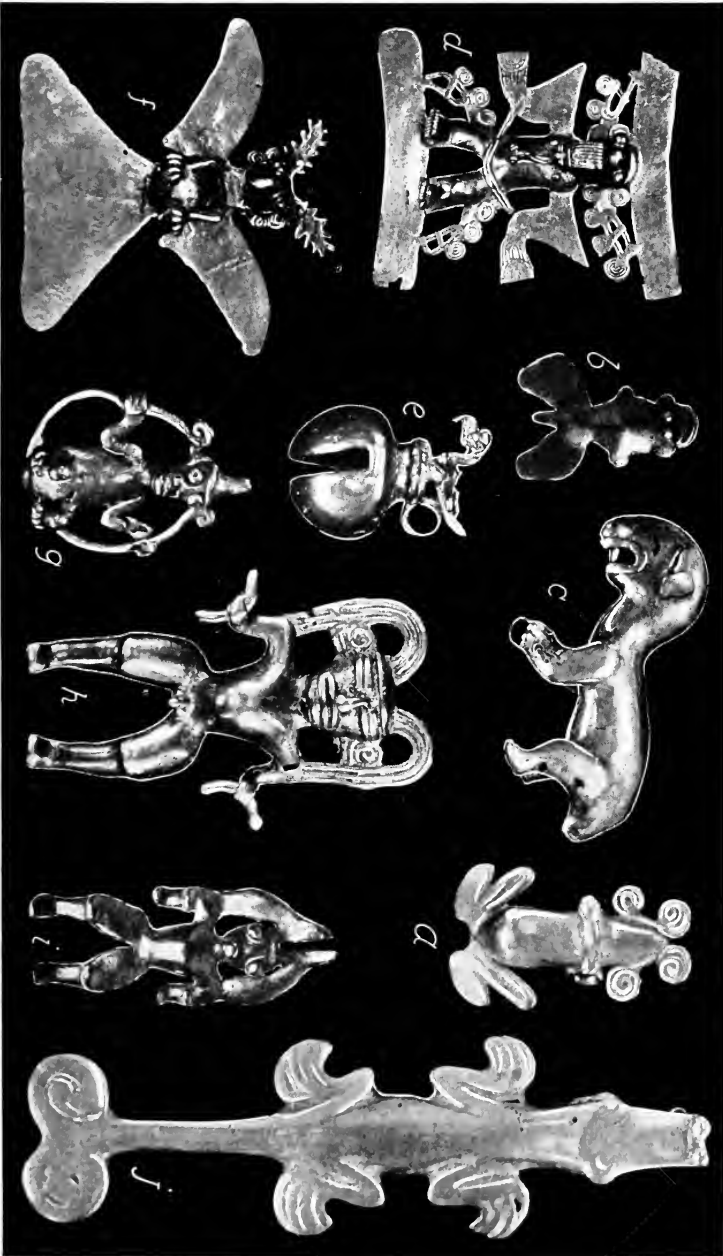
FIG. 78. — Silhouette Alligator motive, Costa Rica.

### GEOMETRIC DESIGNS

Under this heading have been grouped those patterns not obviously of zoöomorphic origin. They form but a small part of the total presented. The writer has attempted to refrain from doubtful identifications of all kinds, though it is more than possible that the majority of the motives in this group are related to animal forms. Key pieces, which establish such connections, are not common, and often the relation of such specimens is not immediately perceived.

### TEXTILE PATTERNS

A small group of geometric patterns shown in pl. LXXXI, *b*, *e*, and fig. 79 are types of design probably taken over from the technic of weaving. No textiles from this region have survived, but an approximate idea of the development of the art, highly developed in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, can be gained from a study of Peruvian and Mayan remains. Peru has furnished numerous specimens of the textiles themselves, while Maya textile designs can be studied on the stelæ and through a few surviving specimens.



GOLD FIGURINES

a, c, h, j.—COSTA RICA. b.—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA. i.—CHICHEN ITZA, YUCATAN



It is notable that the textiles of Nicoya were particularly famed for the beautiful purple dyes employed, and purple is usually found on the pottery in patterns which suggest textiles (pl. LXXXI, *c*).

The typical shape associated with these motives is seen in pl. LXXX, *c*, and fig. 79. Pl. LXXXI, *b*, is taken from the outer rim of a tripod bowl. This group comes only from the Nicoya peninsula and the district immediately north of it.

#### NICOYA GEOMETRIC BOWLS

Prominent among the ceramic remains of the Nicoya peninsula is the class of bowls shown in pl. LXXX and fig. 80, *b*. The designs, it will be observed, are purely geometric, except in pl. LXXX, *b*, where a face has been introduced. In most examples the encircling zone has been divided into squares by vertical lines; the corners of the squares are then blocked off in such fashion as to form a cross (pl. LXXX, *d*), or else small, cross-hatched rectangles are introduced, as in *c*. The inner rims are typically decorated with the motive seen in *d* and *f*, which consists of short perpendicular lines attached to a base line, between which are small circles or dots. Variants of this pattern are seen on every bowl in the group, and it may be regarded as the most typical motive encountered. It is also found in connection with other shapes and patterns, thus forming an important link in connecting several otherwise unrelated designs. This motive may be derived from the feather pattern seen in fig. 35.



FIG. 79. — Jar with decoration suggesting textile pattern. (Height, 11 in.)

A different style of design is shown in fig. 80, *b*. The principal

zone is no longer divided into small units, but the dividing bands form the most important decorative element. Vertical lines flanked by wavy lines or dots are also found on White-line pottery from the Highlands of Costa Rica, and on the White-line, Alligator, and Lost-color wares of Chiriqui. In the last-named ware this pattern falls in the group of designs derived from the octopus. This motive extends northward as far as Mexico. It is found on Maya pottery from Copan and the Ulua valley.

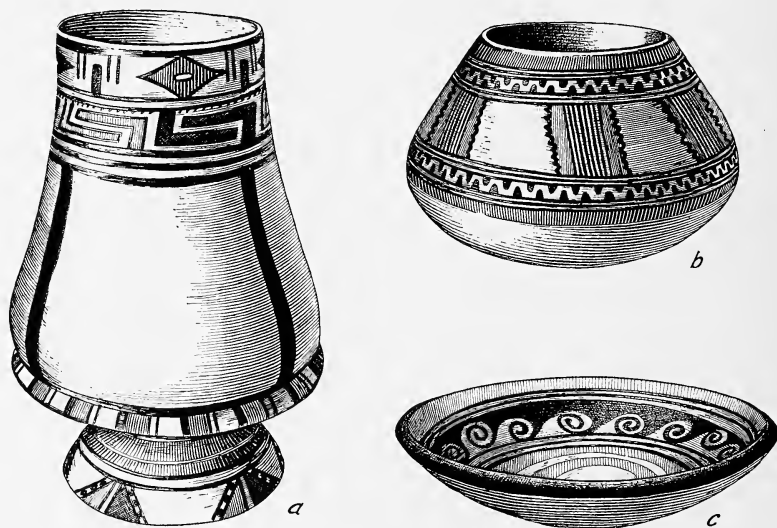


FIG. 80.—Geometric patterns. *a*, *b*, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica; *c*, San Antonio de Nicoya, Costa Rica. (Diameter of *b*, 9 in.)

Nicoya Geometric bowls are usually painted with extreme care and not infrequently retain in part their original luster, so that they are one of the most beautiful types known in this region. They are found in greatest numbers in the Nicoya peninsula and examples have come from the Costa Rican Highlands, but no specimen has yet been discovered in Nicaragua.

#### THE INTERLOCKING STEP SCROLL

The majority of specimens of Nicoya Polychrome Ware are divided into major and minor zones of decoration. Among the pat-



*a*



*b*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: UNCLASSIFIED MOTIVE AND DEGENERATE SILHOUETTE ALLIGATOR PATTERNS. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

DIAMETER OF *a* 5 IN., OF *b*, 7.5 IN.



terns filling the minor zones one of the most common is the interlocking step coil, which, however, sometimes becomes the dominating motive as in fig. 81. The principal decoration here consists of three elements, which are respectively red, orange, and white, each interlocked with the next unit, and encircling the vessel in never-ending succession. Two similar bands are painted on the annular base.

Fig. 82, *c*, is an unusually elaborate example of the interlocking step coil, consisting of five units, two of which are red, two orange, and one (shown divided) white.

The interlocking step coil is a design which extends from Mexico to Peru. In the latter country zoöomorphic origins have been determined. In Mexico, Saville (1920, p. 159) has shown that designs derived from the double gourd, the serpent, and the conch-shell fuse in the interlocking step scroll, which was known by the name *xicalcoliuhqui*, "the crooked calabash".

#### THE INTERLOCKING L

The pattern seen in fig. 80, *a*, in the second band from the top, like the interlocking step coil, to which it is perhaps related, is a common design in minor zones. It is frequently associated with the Feathered Serpent (see pl. XLVII) and might possibly be considered a variant of the Feathered Serpent of type J (fig. 57, *a*), which is also a purely geometric motive. In pl. LXXXII, *a*, a variant is shown to which two plumes have been attached, resulting in a form like the



FIG. 81. — Jar with interlocking step scrolls, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica. (Height, 9 in.)

well-known Pajaritan bird type of New Mexico. The scheme of decoration on this vessel is unusual in that orange has been substi-

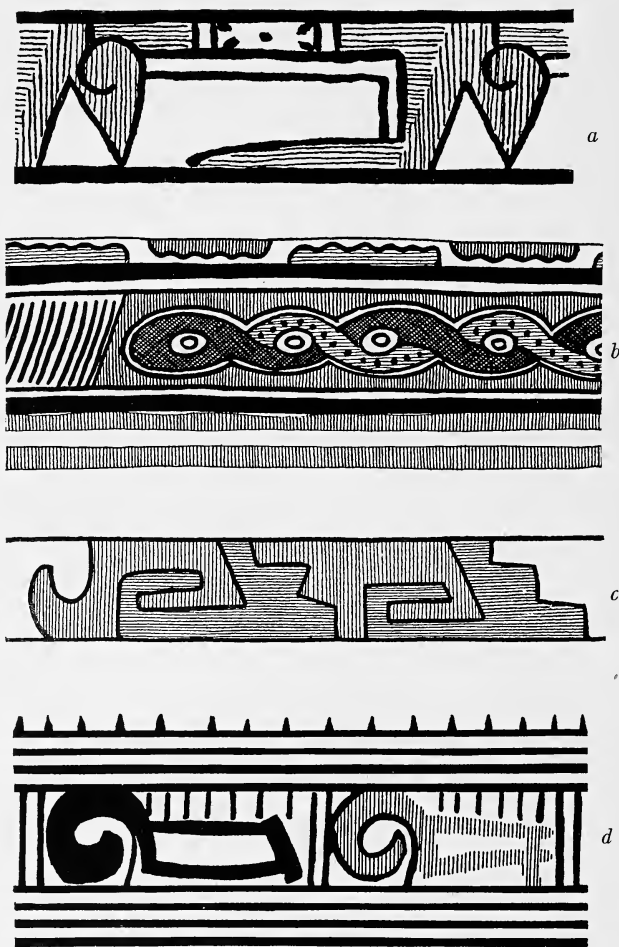
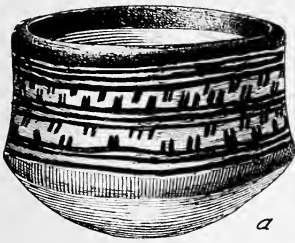


FIG. 82.—Geometric rim patterns. *a, c*, Santa Helena, Nicaragua; *b, d*, Costa Rica.

tuted for red as a filler in all parts of the design, and the base shows the use of a light color, orange, over a dark color, black.

Fig. 82, *d*, displays a variant of this motive, found on the rim of a Nicoya Geometric bowl, which suggests a zoömorphic origin. Another possible variant of this motive is seen in *a*.



a



b



c



d



e



f

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: BOWLS WITH GEOMETRIC DECORATION. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA



## VERTICAL POLYCHROME BANDS

Vertical bands of color separated by black lines are a common motive in minor zones of decoration, and sometimes become the major pattern. Fig. 83 shows an admirable example of the latter instance, on which there are vertical bands in red, orange, gray, and white, separated by narrow black lines. The exterior is colored solid red, a fashion characteristic of the pottery from Tola, Nicaragua.

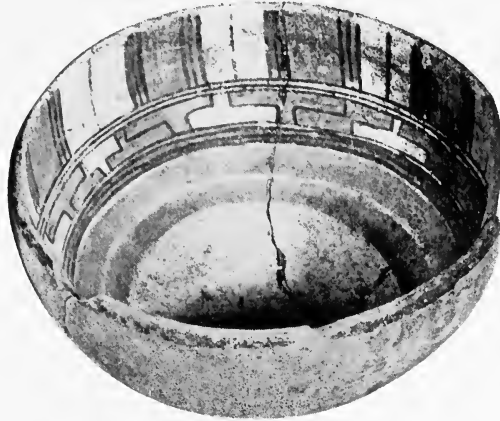


FIG. 83.—Geometric pattern in red, orange, gray, and black; Tola, Nicaragua. (Diameter, 7 in.)

Another example, fig. 84, occurs on the outer rim of a tall tripod dish, of a form found characteristically in the lake region of southern Nicaragua. On the whole this motive is more common in southern Nicaragua than in Nicoya. Both as a major and a minor design it is associated with no particular shapes.

## THE GUILLOCHE

Intertwined serpent bodies, forming a guilloche, are characteristic of the Maya area, both in the stone art and in painted designs on pottery. This motive occurs also in the Pacific area, most frequently in the Nicoya region. The usual manner of presentation is shown in fig. 82, *b*. The bodies of the serpents are depicted in contrasting colors, and one of them is marked by a row of dots. Between the bodies is a series of eyes.

This pattern is found most frequently on the back of small cups with modeled human faces (fig. 30, *a*) and around the necks of globular jars of Filadelfia Ware.

## MISCELLANEOUS MOTIVES

There remain for discussion a number of geometric designs the significance of which is not clear and extended discussion of which

is impossible in view of the bulk of the material demanding more detailed treatment.

The specimen figured in pl. *XLI, a*, shows a series of geometric motives all of which are highly characteristic of the Nicoya peninsula. The broad black bands especially are of common occurrence. They are not found, however, in Nicaragua on vessels of this shape, but do occur on bowls.

Figs. 85 and 86 illustrate the surfaces of two plates and a bowl. In the Nicoya peninsula plates of this kind are often mounted on

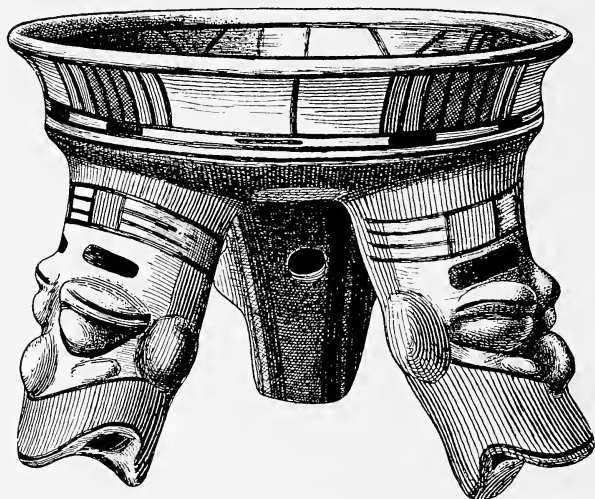


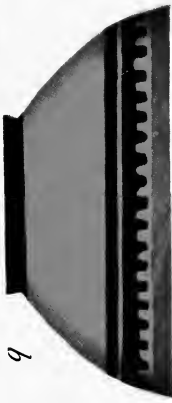
FIG. 84.—Tripod bowl with geometric decoration, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica. (Width, 4.5 in.)

tall tripod legs (see pl. *XLVII*). No special designs are associated with the shape, although patterns like fig. 86, in which there is a central band flanked by similar perpendicular bands, are not uncommon. This division of a design is found on vessels of similar shape, dating from the Inca period, in Peru.

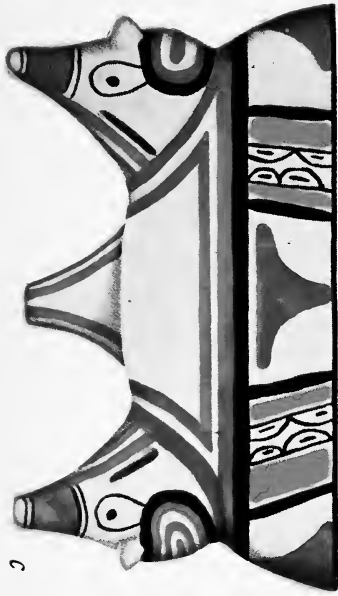
Pl. *LXXXI, a*, represents a common type of decoration found on the external rims of tripod bowls from the Nicoya peninsula and the western Highlands of Costa Rica. The solid red triangle is sometimes replaced by a triangle in outline, as seen in fig. 87, *b*. The treatment of the design of pl. *LXXXI, a*, is entirely characteristic of



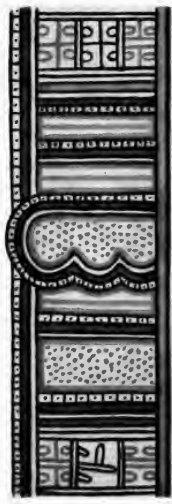
*a*



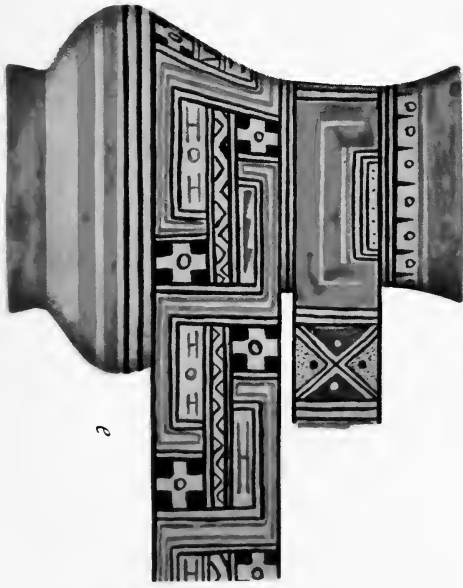
*b*



*c*



*d*



*e*

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: GEOMETRIC PATTERNS

*a, c, e*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA. *b*—FILADELFA, COSTA RICA



this group, and likewise the heavy red lines on the underbody and legs.

Pl. LXXXII, *b*, shows an unusual vessel of which there is almost an exact duplicate in the Keith collection. The most striking feature is the series of black discs ornamented with white rosettes, which resemble the discs seen with the Human Figure (fig. 39), the Plumed Serpent, type A (pl. XLIV, *a*), and the Monkey, type A (pl. LXI). The red and orange loops are strongly suggestive of Maya pottery from Salvador, Copan, and the Ulua valley. At Copan this motive occurs on a vessel found in the vault under stela M, and therefore dating from the end of the fifth century A. D. The pattern of the zone filled with black flag-like objects is probably derived from the feather design seen on the tail of the bird in fig. 35. Fig. 87, *a*, shows a vessel with a variant form of loops.

Pl. LXXIX, *a*, is an unusual pattern, the exact relationship of which is hard to fix. It contains two rectangular panels with a checker-board pattern such as appears on the bodies of Plumed Serpents of type A (pl. XLIV, *b*). The flanking chevrons are filled with black triangles and rows of dots, as is seen in the Serpent B design

in pl. XLVIII, *a*. The whole pattern strongly suggests an insect figure, and, in the Costa Rican Highlands, there is an animal figure motive much like this specimen (pl. CL, *b*). The rectangles at the ends of the chevrons and in the lower center recall the speech scroll of the

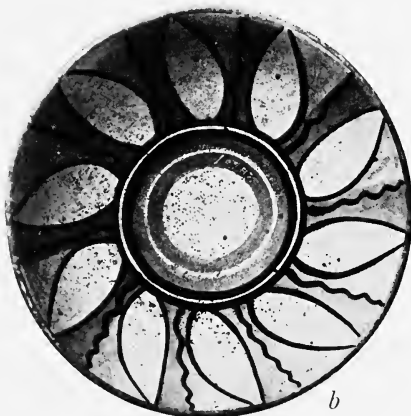


FIG. 85.—Patterns on plates. *a*, Filadelfia, Costa Rica (diameter, 8 in.); *b*, Ometepe island, Nicaragua (diameter, 7 in.).

Monkey, type A (see pl. LXII), which is often ornamented with a row of dots as seen here, and which is sometimes seen combined with the Plumed Serpent (pl. LXV, *b*).



FIG. 86.—Pattern from a bowl, Costa Rica. (Diameter, 5 in.)

Fig. 87, *c*, shows a checker-board pattern as the dominating motive on the rim of a cup. The occurrence of this pattern with the feath-

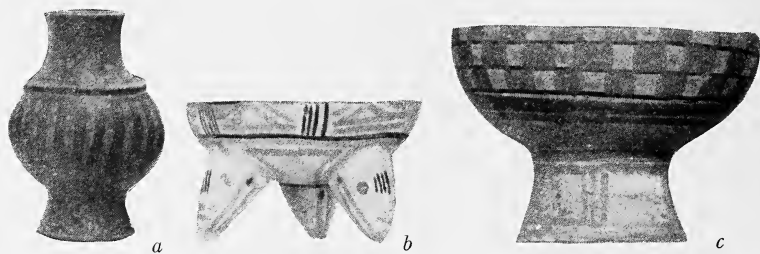
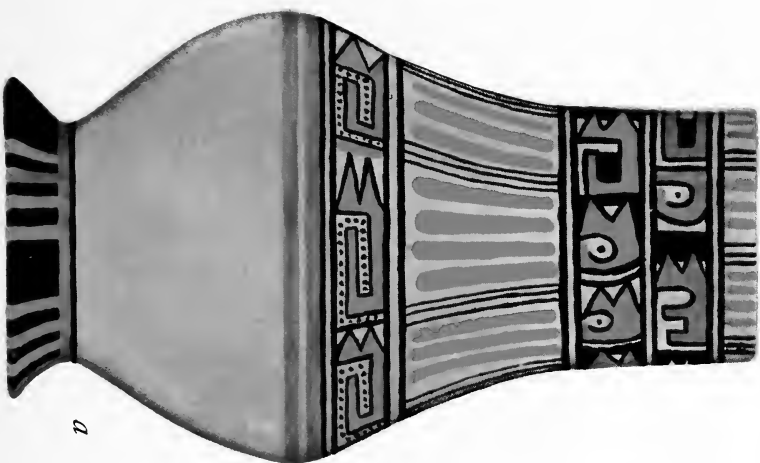
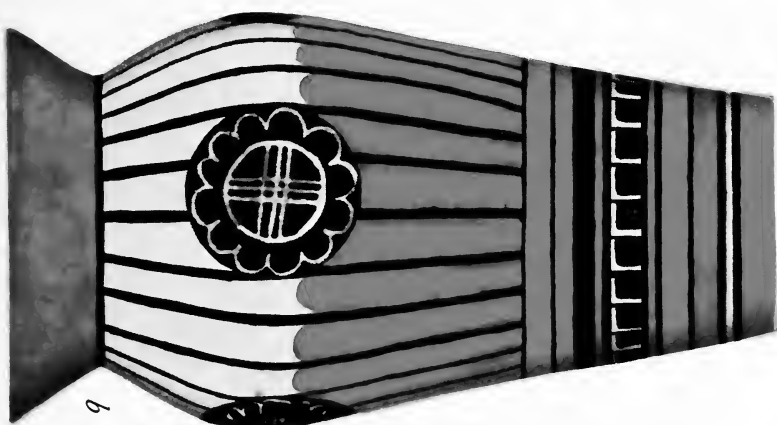


FIG. 87.—Geometric patterns. *a*, Nicoya peninsula; *b*, Filadelfia, Costa Rica (diameter, 5 in.); *c*, Ometepe island, Nicaragua.

ered serpent has been noted in the preceding paragraph. It is also found on the wings of bird effigy jars (pls. XIV; XV, *c*), and, as an independent motive, it is seen on the base of the vessel in pl. XXI.



a



b

NICOYA POLYCHROME WARE: GEOMETRIC PATTERNS. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA

HEIGHT OF *a*, 10 IN.



## RED-LINE DECORATION

A subtype of the Nicoya Polychrome Ware which does not seem to be of local significance is distinguished by the fact that red is substituted for black in outlining the patterns. The red outline is filled with a lighter red or with orange paint. This technic may cover the entire vessel or only a part of it. In the latter case the rest of the decoration is in usual Nicoya Polychrome style. The bowl shown in fig. 88, *c*, however, is decorated entirely in red paint of two shades. The central pattern, which has been partly obliterated by the "killing" of the vessel, is entirely typical of this ware. The nature of the animal portrayed, however, is not clear, although it probably is reptilian.

Fig. 88, *b*, shows another bowl of the same class, but differing from the preceding in that the rim pattern (Jaguar A) is delineated in the usual black outlines. The central pattern, however, is painted entirely in red. The character of the design is not clear. Fig. 89 shows a jar decorated in comparable fashion. The main element is a conventionalized monkey figure which is painted with black outlines. The remainder of the vessel, however, except for three black bands around the neck, is decorated by rectangles outlined in red and filled with yellow.

Fig. 88, *a*, shows a bowl, part of the decoration of which consists of red lines with pendent semicircles. This is a common form of



FIG. 88.—Red-line decoration. *a*, Costa Rica; *b*, Nicaragua; *c*, Tola, Nicaragua.

exterior decoration in the region of the Gulf of Nicoya. The type represented by *b* and *c*, however, comes from the lake region in

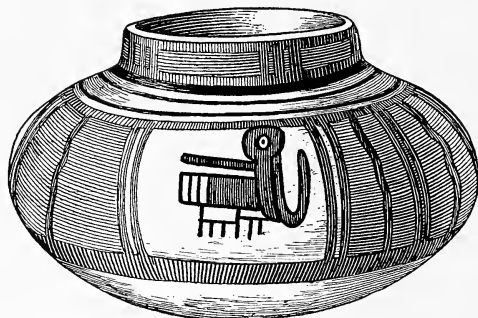


FIG. 89.—Red-line decoration, Filadelfia, Costa Rica. (Width, 9.5 in.)

Nicaragua. This small group shows no relationship with the Red-line Ware of the Highland region. It is to be regarded as a variant of Nicoya Polychrome Ware.



*a*



*b*

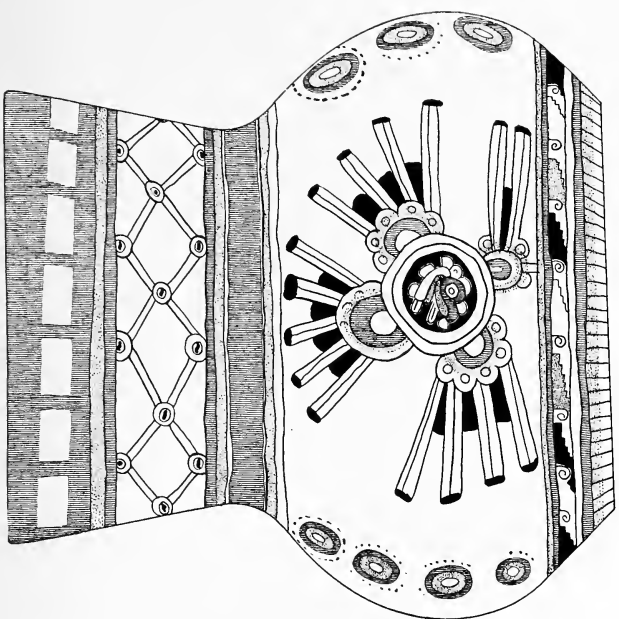
UNDER-SLIP INCISED WARE

*a*—NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA. *b*—SANTA HELENA, NICARAGUA



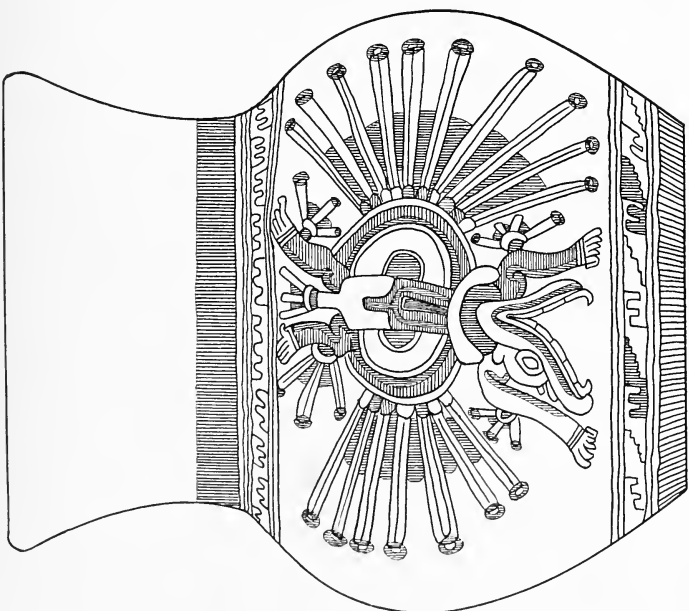






a

UNDER-SLIP INCISED WARE. NICOYA PENINSULA, COSTA RICA  
(HEIGHT OF *a*, 8 IN.; OF *b*, 9 IN.)



b



## CHAPTER VIII

### UNDER-SLIP INCISED WARE

SEVERAL subgroups of Nicoya Polychrome Ware can easily be distinguished, but for the greater part these are purely local developments, whereas the group to be considered extends from Lake Nicaragua to the Nicoya peninsula. It is marked by incised as well as painted designs. The slip, the paste, the shapes of the vessels are those with which we are already familiar, as are the painted patterns. The chief characteristic of the group is then the incised ornamentation. The cutting of these patterns was performed *after* the vessel had dried out, but *before* the application of the slip, as may be observed in pl. LXXXIII, *b*. Examples of this technical process are found to the north in Guatemala and more especially in the region behind Vera Cruz in Mexico, where patterns comparable with some of those described below are encountered. In the Pacific area this ware is not common, and most of the known specimens have come from the vicinity of Lake Nicaragua.

Turning now to the incised designs, we shall first consider a class obviously derived from Mexico. Pls. LXXXIII, *a*, and LXXXIV, *a*, display a pattern which represents Tlaltecutli, the Earth Monster of the Aztec pantheon (fig. 90). In these specimens the open jaws, the arms, and the legs are clearly evident. The bodies are flanked by "shields" to which feathers are attached, a motive found elsewhere in Nicoya Polychrome pottery. The chief difference between the patterns lies in the treatment of the heads. In pl. LXXXIII, *a*, there is no lower jaw, but the upper jaw and eye are shown twice. Another feature of this specimen is the use of blue paint as a



FIG. 90.—The Earth Monster.

filler, a practice quite commonly associated with the design group under consideration.

Pl. LXXXIV, *b*, shows the opposite side of *a*. The pattern here depicted is a plumed serpent which exhibits Mexican character in the treatment of the head and body, more especially of the scales, which are of the type commonly seen with the alligator in the Mexican codices. Pl. LXXXV, *a*, illustrates a conventional Mexican serpent head set in a circular panel, surrounded by the shield and plume motive four times repeated. Blue paint also appears on this specimen.

Pl. LXXXIII, *b*, introduces us to another design group. The figure here is a plumed monster related to the Maya dragon motive. In the

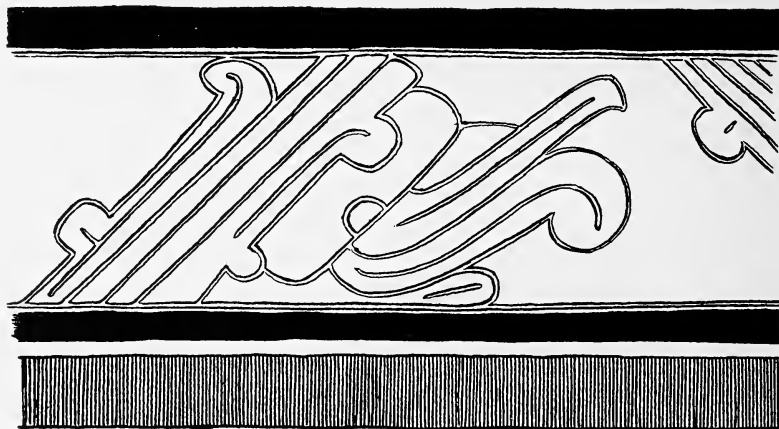


FIG. 91.—Under-slip Incised pattern, Nicaragua. (Length, 4.25 in.)

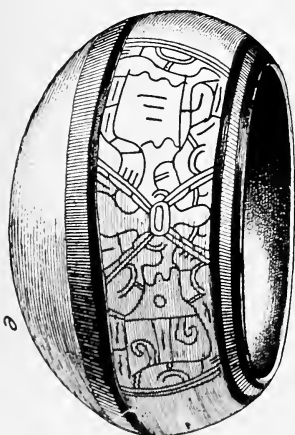
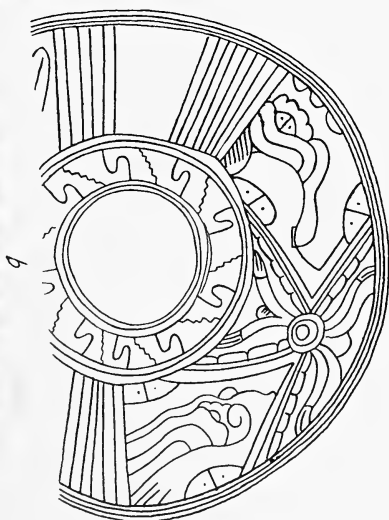
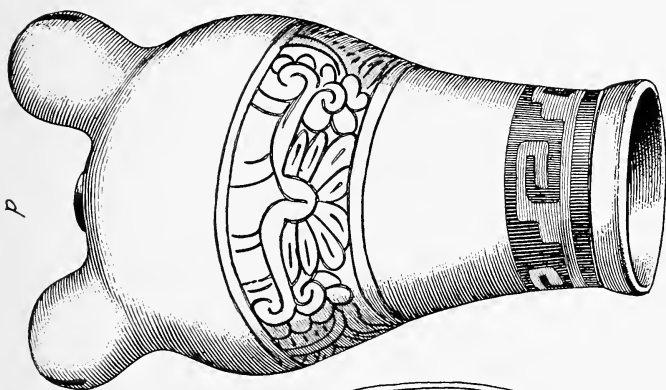
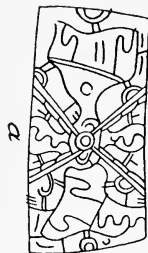
center of the vessel is a hatched rectangle, which represents the body. To the left is the head with open jaws, from which projects a speech scroll. Other variants of this motive appear in pl. LXXXVI. Of these *b* is noteworthy because of the presence of legs. In *a* the body has been eliminated, while considerable degeneration has taken place in pl. LXXXVII, *c*, resulting in a form connected with the Plumed Serpent motive of type C. Various further stages in the complete breaking-up of this motive are given in the same plate. The final stage, in which simplification has taken place and all direct relationship to the original form has disappeared, is well represented by fig. 91.

Another group of Under-slip Incised designs is illustrated in fig. 92.



UNDER-SLIP INCISED WARE. TOLA, NICARAGUA





UNDER-SLIP INCISED WARE  
a-c, e—TOLA, NICARAGUA. d—ATLIXCO, PUEBLA, MEXICO



These simple motives may have a zoöomorphic background, but if so they do not yield readily to analysis. Of these, *c* is often found on the outer rims of bowls decorated on the inside with the painted pattern seen in pl. xxix, *b*. The flower-like central motive is sometimes omitted.

The position of Under-slip Incised Ware in the general scheme of Pacific area ceramics is puzzling. From the first design group, representing the Earth Monster, it is evident that relationship exists with Mexican art of the Toltec epoch. The second group of patterns appears to be related to designs found in the region behind Vera Cruz in Mexico. A rather direct connection may perhaps be argued from such vessels as pl. LXXXVII, *d*, decorated with the same technic and style of pattern as the

Pacific area group. A third class of pattern is associated with the Human Figure motive (pl. xxvi, *d*) which is allied to patterns of the Mayan Old Empire. As a working hypothesis I am inclined to see in the Under-slip Incised Ware the influence of the Nicaraö, who are said to have come from Mexico, and who may have shared the artistic traditions of the Vera Cruz potters. In fact this is the only type of pottery which I feel it safe to assign to the Nicaraö at all. The reason for this difficulty in identifying their pottery is perhaps that the invaders brought few women with them. Now, in Central America the women are almost everywhere the potters, and the Nicaraö must have secured most of their wives by conquest from the surrounding tribes. Hence their pottery would theoretically be similar to or identical with that of their neighbors—with the exception of a few designs such as appear on this ware. It is noteworthy, at any rate, that most of the known specimens come from territory once occupied by the Nicaraö.

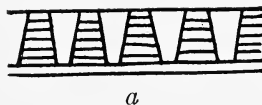
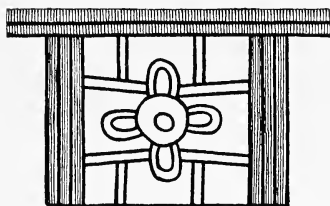
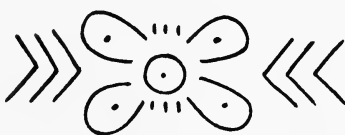
*a**b**c*

FIG. 92. — Under-slip Incised patterns, Ometepe island, Nicaragua.

## CHAPTER IX

### LUNA WARE

#### DISTRIBUTION AND CHARACTER

THE first group of Nicaraguan pottery to be subjected to extensive analysis was discovered by Bransford (1881) on the hacienda of Don José Angel Luna, near the town of Moyogalpa on Ometepe island, and was named in honor of the owner of the estate. While the forms and patterns described by Bransford may be amplified, and knowledge of their distribution has increased, the fundamental types have remained unchanged. Luna Ware is marked primarily by a light-colored slip, by delicately painted patterns in distinctive colors, and to a certain extent by characteristic shapes.

Luna Ware appears to center on Zapatero and Ometepe islands; it is not found frequently on the mainland to the west and south, but does occur commonly to the east and north. Specimens passed southward in trade as far as Las Mercedes and the Nicoya peninsula. In the territory north of the latter, Luna Ware designs were sometimes copied by the local inhabitants, and fuse with Nicoya Polychrome Ware.

Luna Ware was first discovered in association with the large boot-shape burial urns, and, through this connection, it is known to be, in part at least, post-European, for objects such as glass beads have been found in the burial urns of Solentiname and Zapatero islands.

#### LOCAL TYPES

As in the case of Nicoya Polychrome Ware, subtypes of local importance apparently occur in Luna Ware. However, so few specimens have been found outside of Ometepe island that this subject may well be left for the future student. Nevertheless, it can be pointed out that Luna Ware patterns on pottery from Costa Rica are often painted with the broader, less delicate treatment of Nicoya Polychrome Ware, rather than in the fine-line technic of true Luna Ware.

## SHAPES

The commonest shape of Luna Ware vessel is the bowl, often modified by tripod legs or annular base. More rarely, subglobular jars occur, and occasionally pear-shape vessels, which are obviously borrowed from the Nicoya Polychrome type (fig. 95, *a*). The sub-

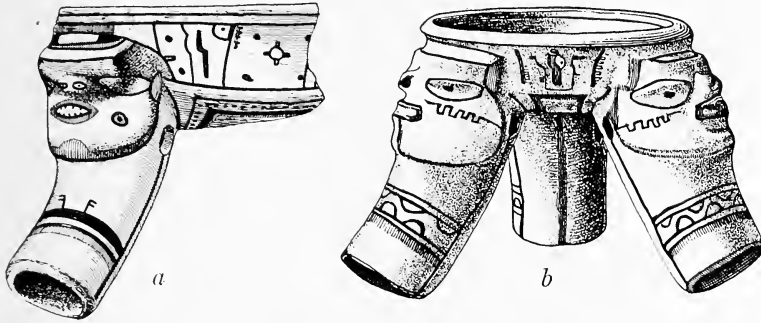


FIG. 93.—Luna Ware bowls, Nicaragua. (Width of *b*, 4.5 in.)

globular jar shown in pl. LXXXVIII, *j*, is marked by an everted lip in a fashion typical of this shape; fig. *o* of the same plate presents a rare form with a slightly flaring rim, intermediate between the jar and bowl types.

The bowl is by far the commonest Luna Ware shape, and it is usually found with modifications. Pl. LXXXVIII shows a series of this type, three with annular bases. Tripod legs of two standard shapes are found. One consists of human or jaguar heads of the general form of the Nicoya Polychrome Ware supports, but differentiated by the sharp angle or actual projection of the forehead (fig. 97, *b*). The second form (fig. 93) is a hollow tube, usually open at the base, and adorned at the top with a modeled head.



FIG. 94.—A bowl type suggesting Maya influence; Tola, Nicaragua. (Diameter, 4.5 in.)

This cylindrical form probably is related to the Maya dishes supported by cylindrical legs, which, except in specimens of a very late date, are set directly up and down. Fig. 94 shows a Nicaraguan specimen with tripod legs of the usual Maya type. This is an uncommon form in Nicaragua, for all other cylindrical legs known to

the writer are set at an angle, but it suggests that the slanting legs come from a Maya prototype.

Aberrant shapes are rare. Fig. 98, *a*, shows a pear-shape vessel, supported by Atlantean figures with projecting heads, which rest upon an annular base. Fig. 96 is an oval bowl.

#### OTHER FEATURES

The paste of which Luna Ware vessels are made appears to be of a finer quality than that of Nicoya Polychrome Ware. Firing as a rule has been so complete that sherds exhibit a uniform color and texture from side to side of the vessel. Overfiring is rare.

The slip is most characteristically an ivory white (pl. xciv, *b*), although it often is slightly tinged with brown and yellow, more rarely gray. In quality

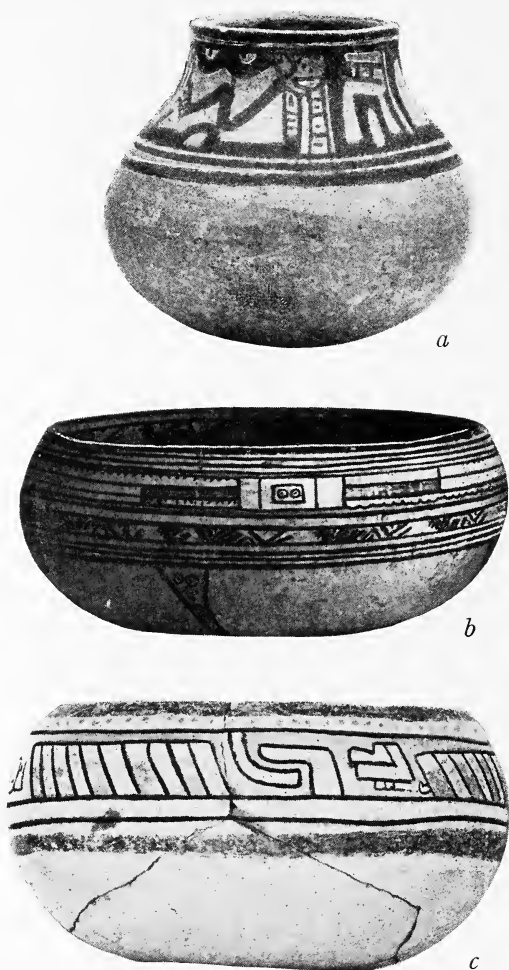
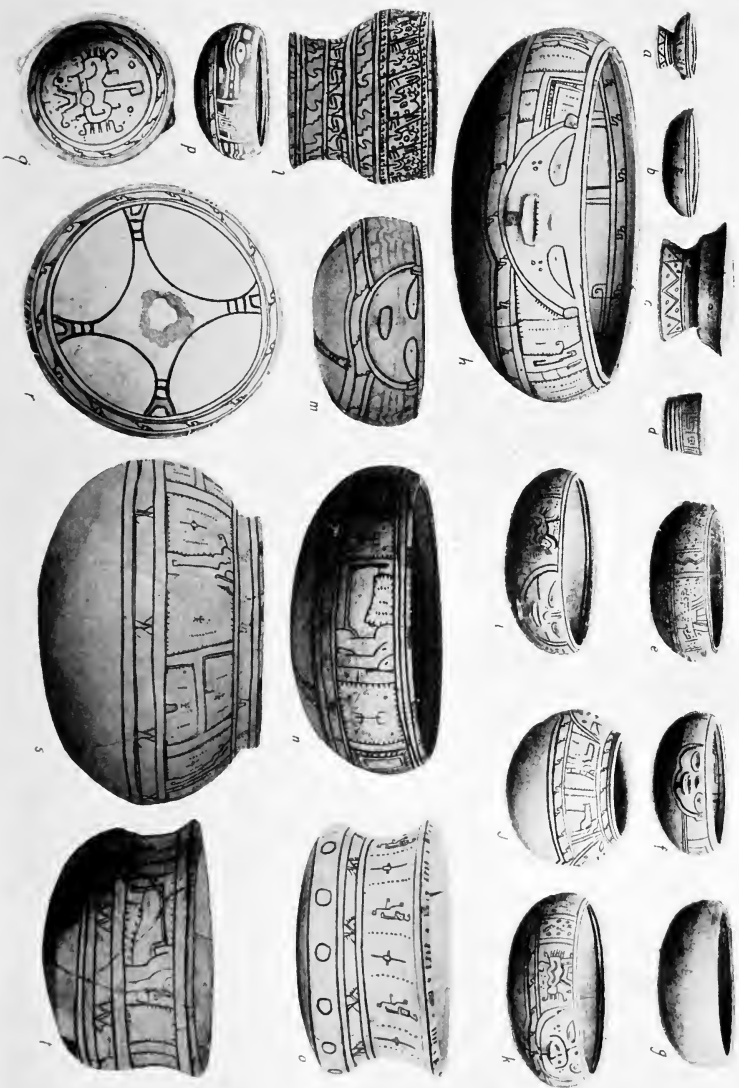


FIG. 95.—Luna Ware: *a*, Monkey motive, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica (diameter, 9.5 in.); *b*, Winged-head motive, Nicaragua (diameter, 7.5 in.); *c*, Winged-head motive, Ometepe island, Nicaragua (diameter, 8 in.).





it resembles several coats of oil paint, and it has a slightly glossy appearance.

The standard colors are red and two shades of brown, the darker used for outlines and the lighter for filling (pl. xciv, *b*). Black is sometimes used for outlines (pl. xcv), and orange for filling (pl. lxxxix).

A vegetal varnish was probably applied after firing. However, it has rarely been preserved.

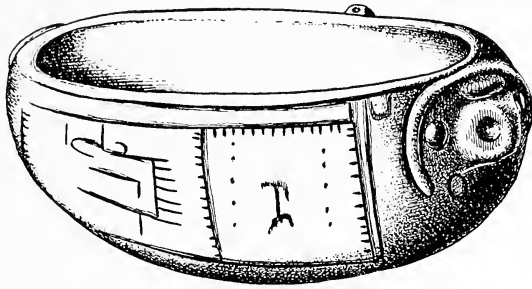


FIG. 96.—Oval bowl of Luna Ware, Ometepe island, Nicaragua. (Height, 3 in.)

### DECORATION

Decoration is of two classes, modeled and painted. Painted embellishment is complementary to the modeled and also stands by itself. Modeled decoration is confined to heads in low relief on the body of the vessel and to the tripod legs. The absence of effigy vessels is noteworthy. Painted decoration is confined to encircling zones usually cut into panels.

Subclassification has been made by designs according to the following scheme:

Modeled decoration	{	Human face.
		Jaguar.
		Bird.
Painted decoration	{	Feathered Serpent, types A-H.
		Winged Head, types A and B.
		Human face.
		Monkey.
		Jaguar.
		Geometric patterns.

### MODELED DECORATION

#### THE HUMAN FACE

Modeled human faces appear on the sides of globular bowls, on the tops of tripod legs of the cylindrical type, and on the other

type of tripod leg. The faces on bowls, of which Bransford (1881) has given a good series, are not in such high relief as those on the Nicoya Polychrome Ware, and they do not cover enough of the surface to create the impression of an effigy vessel. The example given in pl. LXXXVIII, *h*, is marked by slightly raised mouth, nose, and eyes. The cheeks are bounded by a double outline, and the whole is flanked by painted conventionalized serpents. Facial tattooing or painting is represented in this specimen by small circles under the eyes and by a stripe on the chin.

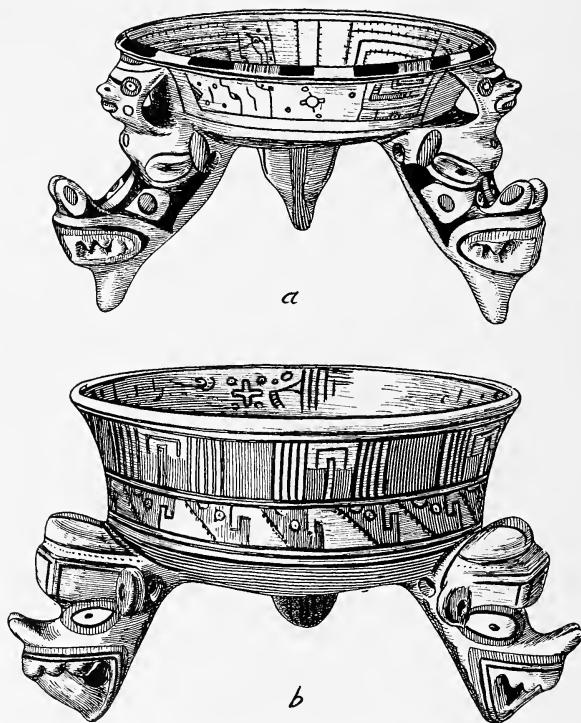


FIG. 97.—Luna Ware bowls. (Diameter of *a*, 10.5 in.; of *b*, 8 in.)

Fig. 93 shows two faces on the top of cylindrical legs. They are essentially the same as the type just described, and are also flanked by conventionalized serpents. The facial markings are in each case different. It is not improbable that the potter made use of the family or individual patterns for facial painting and that they thus served as property marks.

The other type of tripod leg furnishes the base for another kind of face, such as is seen in fig. 97, *b*. The head portrayed here is similar to the heads used to support Nicoya Polychrome Ware bowls (fig. 34, *c*, *d*), but differs from them in the sharp projection of the forehead and in the angle of attachment to the body of the vessel.

## JAGUAR HEADS

Just as in the Nicoya Polychrome Ware tripod bowls the human head type runs into that of the jaguar, so also in Luna Ware there is a jaguar head connected with the human form. In both wares the difference between the human and the jaguar head lies chiefly in the



FIG. 98.—Two unusual Luna Ware vessels from Filadelfia, Costa Rica. (Diameter of *a*, 8.5 in.; of *b*, 9 in.)

treatment of the nose. Examples of Luna Ware jaguars are seen in fig. 97. Fig. *b* is apparently the closest to a human head, as the ear-plugs are shown; however, the snout is distinctly that of a beast. Fig. *a* is more obviously an animal form. The small handles attached to the forehead of the jaguar in this specimen and embellished with modeled human faces are most unusual.

Fig. 98, *b*, shows a vessel intermediate in type between Luna and

Nicoya Polychrome Ware. The shape is taken from the latter apparently, although in reality the base is not annular but flat, and forms a part of the body of the jar. The design on the base also is taken from Nicoya Polychrome Ware, while the upper painted decoration is the Luna Ware serpent. The modeled decoration represents the jaguar, the head completely in the round, and the body and limbs in relief flanked by the patterns found with the jaguar in Nicoya Polychrome Ware. One other vessel is known in which this animal is portrayed in a similar fashion (fig. 20, *b*).

#### BIRD HEADS

Bird heads are found in connection with the cylindrical tripod leg. The example shown in pl. xcii is typical of this rare form. The head is indicated in relief, and the wings and body are suggested by painted outline. Across the back of the neck runs a band decorated with the feather markings seen on Nicoya and Highland Polychrome Wares, and well illustrated in the very similar tripod support shown in fig. 35.

#### PAINTED DECORATION

##### PLUMED SERPENT

We have already seen that the Plumed Serpent occupies a dominant position among the Nicoya Polychrome Ware patterns, and we have traced some of its many transmogrifications. The Plumed Serpent is even more important in Luna Ware, and is found on more than half the vessels now preserved in museums. The Luna Ware Plumed Serpent does not appear in as many guises as the Plumed Serpent of Nicoya, but it is found in forms no less conventionalized. Bransford (1881) surmised that some of the geometric types were derived from the serpent, but was not able to establish the connection. Joyce (1916), however, has definitely established the nature of these motives and the essential unity of the painted serpent patterns in Luna, Managua, and Nicoya Polychrome Wares.

Before commencing a detailed discussion, it must be pointed out that the Plumed Serpent is shown in three different "schools" of design, which are exhibited in pls. xcii, lxxxix, and xc, *c*, and which may be termed respectively the simple, complex, and curvilinear technics. The simple style, on the whole, is most characteristic of



LUNA WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE A. NICARAGUA

DIAMETER, 6.5 IN.



Luna Ware and includes types C, D, E, G, and H. The complex technic is represented by type A, and the curvilinear by types B and F. The significance of these schools is probably geographical or chronological, but this cannot be determined without careful field study.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE A

The first type to be considered (pl. LXXXIX) is found on both the rims and the floors of small bowls. The floor is not treated as a single unit, but contains in the center a circular panel which is

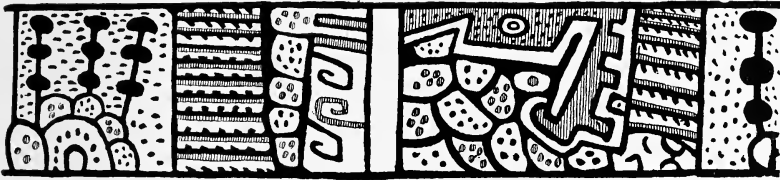


FIG. 99.—Luna Ware: Plumed Serpent motive, type A, Alta Gracia, Nicaragua. (Length, 8 in.)

joined to the outer circumference by two pairs of parallel lines. The shape of the space to be decorated is therefore not greatly changed from that on the rim, and the pattern undergoes correspondingly little modification. The pattern itself consists of a serpent head with open jaws (facing the left), behind which is a rather confused mass of feathers, including several of the Nicoya Polychrome Ware feather motives. Fig. 100, *b*, is a very similar pattern divided into two units, one consisting of head and feathers and the other solely of feathers. Fig. 99 is the rim variant of the preceding example. The vertical division of this design and the three black objects at the extreme left end run parallel to the Nicoya Polychrome Ware Plumed Serpent, type C (pl. I, *g*, *h*).

This form of Plumed Serpent is closely related to types B and C. The connection with type B (pl. xc, *a*) is too obvious to require comment. Spinden (1917, fig. 59) has published two specimens which are intermediate between types A and C.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE B

A second class of serpent motive is particularly close to the Maya representations of this reptile. In pl. xc, *a*, *c*, which differ only in



FIG. 100.—Luna Ware: Plumed Serpent motives. *a*, Type B; *b*, type A.

adaptation to the shape of the panel in which they are enclosed, the open jaws, eye, and protruding fang of the Maya serpent are apparent. Furthermore, a trace of the strong curves of the Maya artist, as well as the design, has survived transplantation. The pattern of pl. xc, *c*, consists of a greatly elongated upper jaw and a very much reduced lower jaw. A huge fang (red and brown) projects from the end of the upper jaw and repeats the outline of the snout. The tongue is represented by a red panel pendent from the center of the upper jaw. The red panel with small scallops on it, seen both in front of and behind the head, may well be a development of the tongue and gums. It is highly characteristic of the Luna Ware Serpents of types B and C.

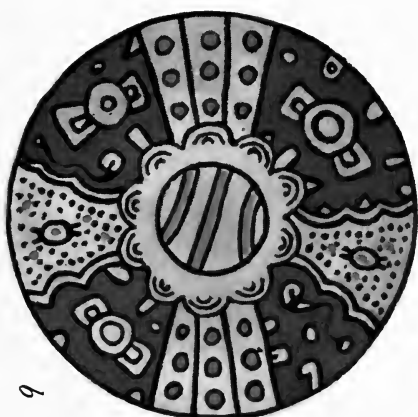
Pl. xc, *a*, is slightly different from *c*, owing to the different shape of the field. More

often when this pattern appears on the floors of bowls, the area is divided into two major portions, as in fig. 100, *a*. A comparison of fig. 100, *a*, *b*, shows that the Serpent of type A is represented with the *upper* jaw toward the circumference, whereas type B is shown with the *lower* jaw outward. This difference is true not only of these two specimens, but of all others known to the writer.

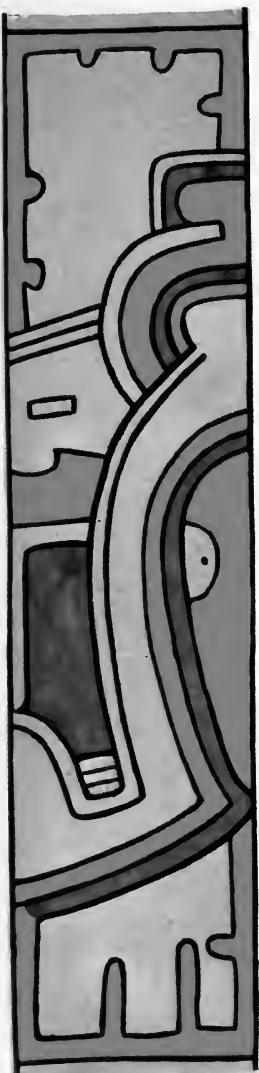
Fig. 101 illustrates what is without doubt the finest vessel of this class yet discovered. The main pattern is a two-headed Serpent of type B. These heads are connected by a rectangular body flanked with plumes, and curiously enough one head in each pair is shown upside down, as can be seen from the head on the inner rim. Fig.



a



b



c

LUNA WARE

a, c—PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVE, TYPE B; ALTA GRACIA, NICARAGUA  
b—WINGED-HEAD PATTERN, NICARAGUA



98, *b*, is also an unusual vessel, on the shoulder of which the Serpent motive is seen.

The examples thus far considered are of fairly obvious type, but we must now follow the course of conventionalization of this motive and treat of the less obvious forms.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE C

The transition from the Serpent of type B to type C is shown in pl. xci, of which pattern *a* belongs to type B and calls for no special explanation; *d* and *e* belong to type C, which is marked by the simplicity of the design and the large amount of open space—a



FIG. 101.—An unusually elaborate Luna Ware bowl, Alta Gracia, Nicaragua.  
(Diameter, 7.5 in.)

feature most unusual in American ceramics; *b* is marked primarily by the enlargement of the fangs (here two are shown) and the running wild of the scalloped motive which may be derived from the tongue. The development of the fang is carried to still greater extremes in *c*; *d* repeats the outlines of *c*, but is treated with a totally different “feeling”. In *e* the pattern is reduced to the extreme simplicity so characteristic of this particular modification of the serpent. Fig. 102, *a*, shows the pattern of pl. xci, *c*, adapted to the floor of a

bowl with dividing lines similar to those in fig. 100. Other examples of this type are given in pl. LXXXVIII.

A common variant of type C appears on the inner rim (top) of pl. xcii. At the left end of the panel is the serpent head. The eye is easily distinguished, below which is the jaw shown in brown. Below the jaw is a red panel representing the tongue, from which projects a hook-like object representing the fang. Above the eye is a red panel terminating in "hands" (cf. fig. 50). This is a combination of the eye-plate, so common in Mexican and Mayan serpents, and the

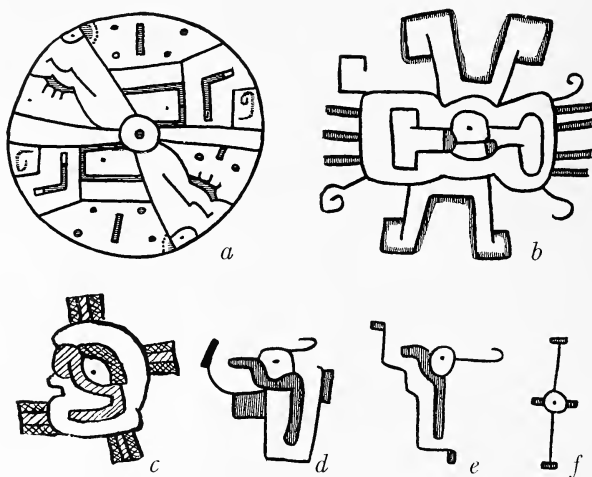
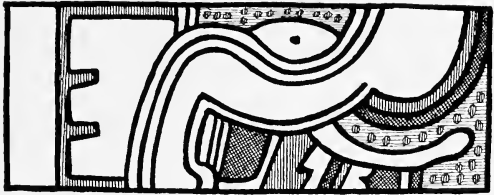


FIG. 102.—Luna Ware: Conventionalized Serpent patterns. *a*, Type C; *b*, type D; *c-f*, type E.

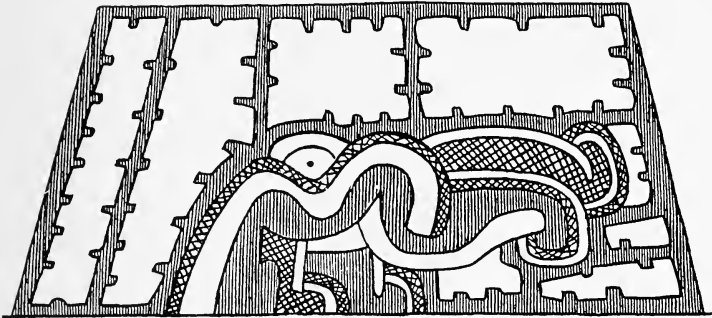
head plumes. At the right end of the panel in the upper corner is a very conventionalized face, possibly human, beneath which are plumes.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE D

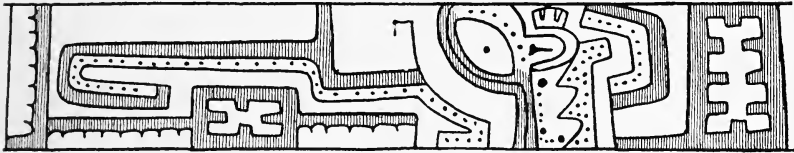
A special form of serpent is developed from the head motive seen on the left end of the inner rim panel of pl. xcii. The right and central portions of this pattern are eliminated and the head which remains is treated with greater elaboration. An example of this new form is given in pl. LXXXVIII, *q*. The eye is evident in the center of this design, below which projects a large recurved fang. Above the eye are plumes and the eye-plate.



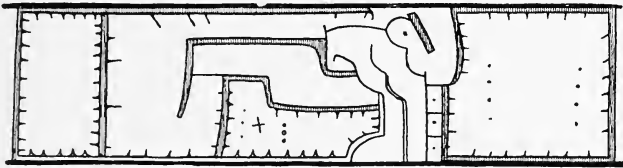
*a*



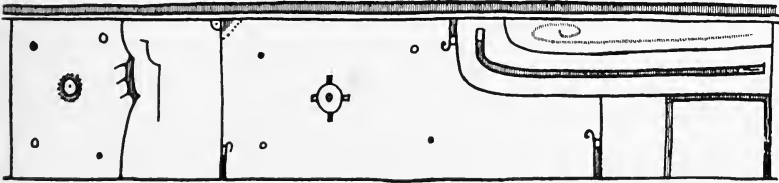
*b*



*c*



*d*



*e*

LUNA WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVES, TYPES B AND C. NICARAGUA



This particular aspect of the Luna Ware Plumed Serpent is fairly common and is found on the floors and outer rims of bowls. Bransford (1881) has published a good series of the various changes that take place. A final form is shown in fig. 102, *b*, in which the head has become double-ended, and the fangs below and plumes above the head have assumed an identical aspect.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE E

Yet another variant of the Plumed Serpent based on type C is shown in fig. 102, *c-f*. In *c* the eye, eye-plate, open jaws, and plumes of the feathered serpent are easily discerned. It is worthy of note

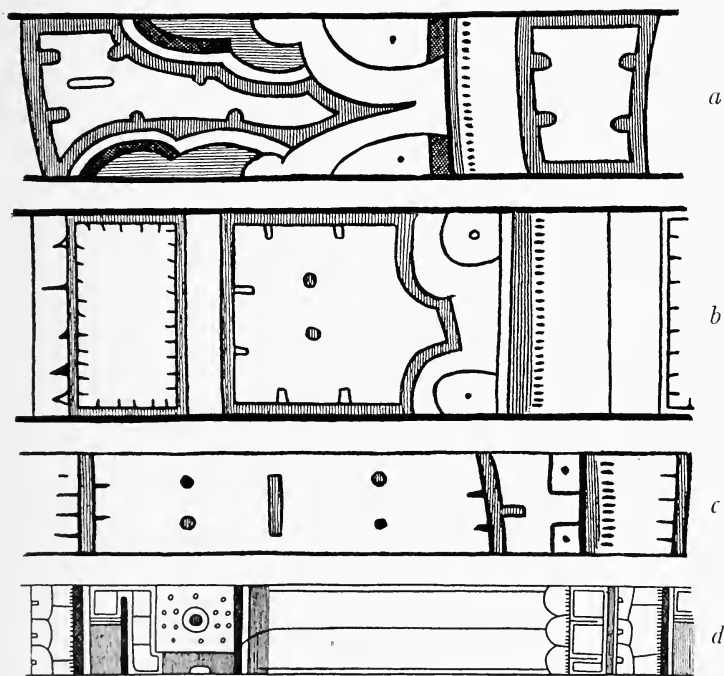


FIG. 103.—Luna Ware: Conventionalized Serpent patterns. *a*, Type F, El Menco, Nicaragua; *b*, *c*, type G, Nicaragua; *d*, type H, Ometepe island, Nicaragua.

that the serpent jaws are shown in Nicaragua in the exact form in which they occur in association with the god Tlaloc in Mexico. In

*d* and *e* the outline of the head has gone, while in *f* only the eye and plumes remain.

Examples of vessels with this decoration may be seen in pl. LXXXVIII, *o*, and fig. 93, *b*.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE F

Fig. 103, *a*, shows a conventionalized form of the Plumed Serpent derived from type B through the reduplication of parts. In fact, it consists of two nearly complete representations of type B placed throat to throat in the same panel, as will be apparent if a sheet of paper is held over the lower half and the resultant pattern is compared with pl. xc, *c*.

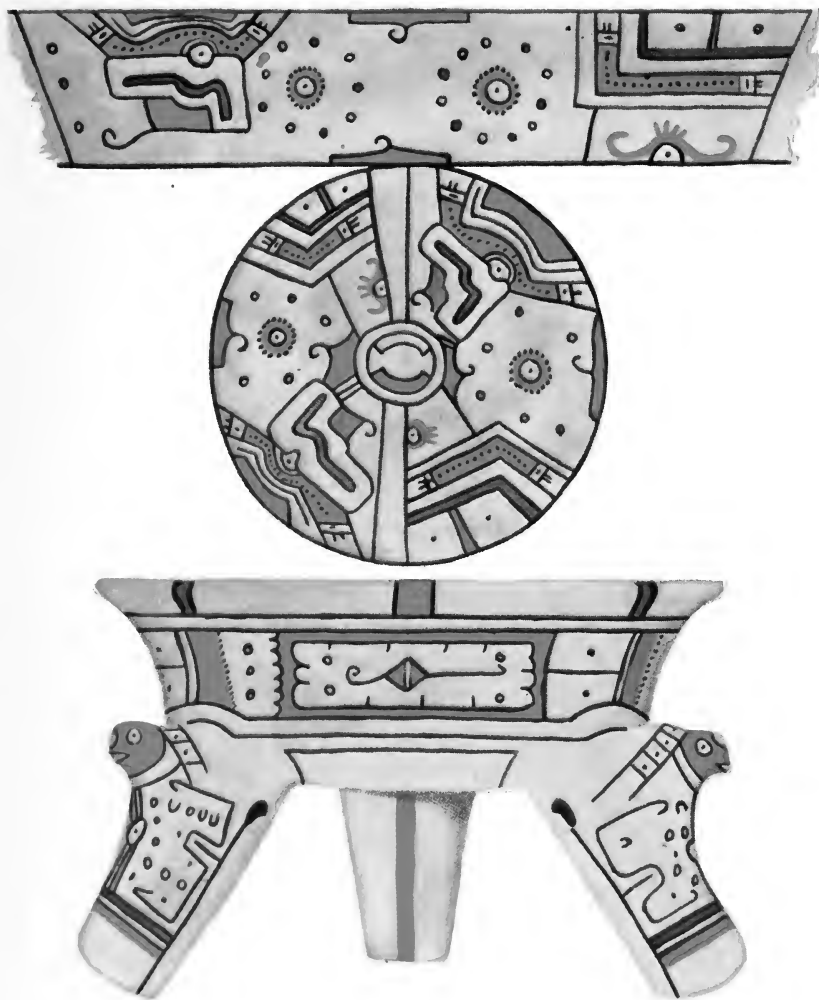
Conventionalized renderings of animal forms in primitive art exhibit a constant tendency to display more of the animal than can be seen with the eye. This tendency is most highly developed in the Americas on the west coast of Canada and southern Alaska, but it appears sporadically in other parts of the New World. Fig. 103, *a*, is doubtless a form arrived at through the desire to display both sides of the head at the same time, which is done by splitting it from top to bottom and turning both sides toward the spectator.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE G

As the Plumed Serpent of type B, based on sinuous curves of Mayan feeling, gave way to simpler forms which were recorded as type C, so also type F finds a parallel in the simpler school of design. This is illustrated in fig. 103, *b*, *c*. The connection with *a* is fairly obvious, the most stable character being the two eyes in the right-hand end of the various panels. Designs of this class are frequently found on the same vessel as those of type C.

#### PLUMED SERPENT—TYPE H

Fig. 103, *d*, shows a rare form of Luna Ware Plumed Serpent. Although painted in Luna Ware style, this pattern is apparently derived directly from the Nicoya Polychrome Ware Plumed Serpent of type C, of the subtype shown in pl. LII, *c*. The principal elements exhibited are a rectangular head, eye, and large fang at the left end of the panel, and long plumes in the center and at the right end.



LUNA WARE: PLUMED SERPENT MOTIVES, TYPES C AND D. NICARAGUA

HEIGHT, 4.5 IN.



## THE WINGED-HEAD MOTIVE

*On the Interior of Bowls*

The curious pattern shown in pl. xciii and fig. 104, *a*, has been designated the Winged-head motive. In pl. xciii, *a*, the most obvious form, it consists of a circular face framed by two lines of plumes, a pattern which repeats four times with slight variation. In *b* the face has become a series of concentric circles flanked by plumes, and in fig. 104 the face reappears, but dissociated from the wings, which are attached to concentric circles in the bottom of the bowl. The pattern within these circles, if there ever was one, has been destroyed. Further modification appears in pl. xc, *b*, where an example is shown in colors. As in the last specimen, two sets of plumes are attached to a central circle, perpendicular to which are scalloped panels with an eye in the center.

A secondary motive, which accompanies the Winged Head, appears in every example. It is in the center of pl. xciii, *a*, on the rim and base of *b* and in pl. xc, *b*, and on the rim of fig. 104. It consists of concentric circles to which small loops are attached, and resembles patterns seen in the Mexican codices and likewise in our pl. xxxi.

In the manner of portrayal of this pattern, two features are noteworthy. In the first place, the design is set off against a red background, much in the manner seen in the Silhouette Jaguar and Silhouette Alligator previously discussed (pages 141, 177). Secondly, the rim and the floor of the vessel are treated as a single field of

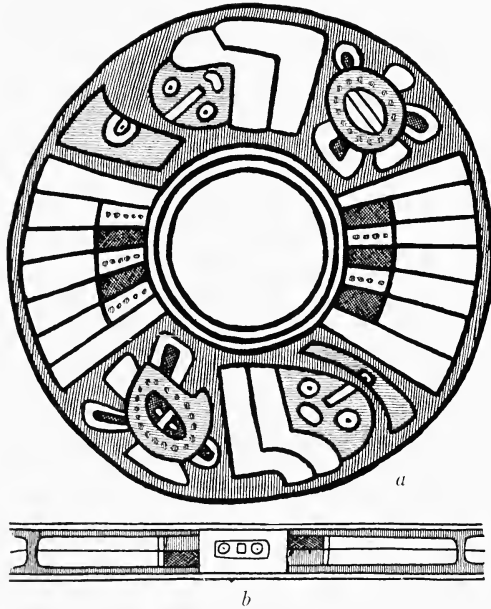


FIG. 104.—Luna Ware: Winged-head motive. *a*, Ometepe island, Nicaragua (diameter, 5 in.); *b*, El Menco, Nicaragua (length, 7 in.).

decoration, a fashion not at all characteristic of this region or of American pottery as a whole, for almost invariably the rim is divided into zones by encircling bands and the floor of bowls is limited by the circumference of a circle.

The red background has already been encountered on certain Nicoya Polychrome Ware vessels (pls. xxix, xxxi). One of these (pl. xxxi, *b*) has human heads, shown full face, of a type very similar to the Luna Ware painted human heads discussed below (fig. 105). Both of these specimens are of unusual type, and it might be argued that they actually belong with Luna Ware. However, the shapes of the vessels and the associated patterns on the exterior of pl. xxix place them definitely with Nicoya Polychrome Ware.

The affiliations of this pattern outside of Luna Ware are as yet uncertain. Relationship to the Plumed Serpent is probable, but not obvious, the closest connection being with the Nicoya Polychrome Ware Plumed Serpent of type C. The Winged Head can be definitely placed in Luna Ware, owing to the class of vessels on which it is found, namely, small bowls, either globular or flat-bottomed and supported by tripod legs of Luna Ware type.

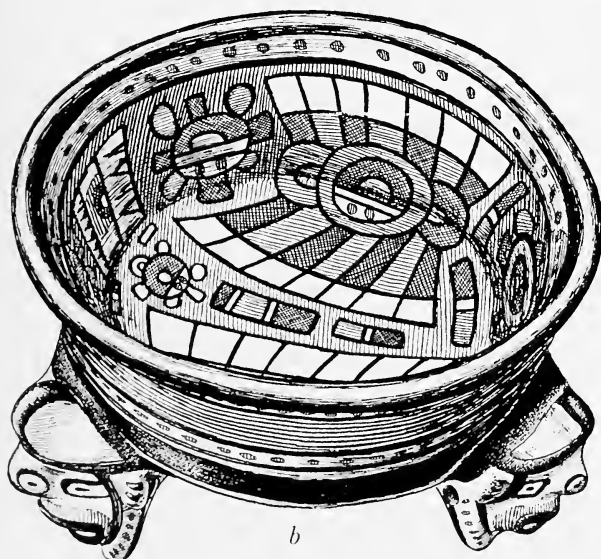
#### *On Bowl Rims*

The transference of a pattern from one shape of field to another and the subsequent modifications are always of interest. An admirable example is furnished by the changing of the Winged-head motive from the circular field of bowl interiors to the narrow zones on bowl rims. The result of this transfer is shown in fig. 104, *b*. The central element of this design is the face, formerly circular and now rectangular, and on either side are plumes with bases of alternate colors and reduced in number, owing to the limitation in area, to two on each side of the head. The whole pattern is again set off by a red background.

Fig. 95, *b*, shows the general appearance of a bowl with this type of decoration; *c* is painted with a variant pattern in which the plumes are set diagonally and interspaced with a chevron-like motive seen in combination with the head in fig. 104. Fig. 98, *a*, is a most unusual vessel, intermediate in type between Luna and Nicoya Polychrome Ware. The neck is embellished with a Winged-head pattern, through the center of which runs a guilloche.



*a*



*b*

LUNA WARE: WINGED-HEAD PATTERN  
*a*—ALTA GRACIA, NICARAGUA (DIAMETER, 4.5 IN.). *b*—NICARAGUA



## THE HUMAN HEAD

The painted human head furnishes the motive for a Luna Ware pattern usually not of major importance. In fig. 105, however, it has become the central design of an elaborately decorated bowl. The heads on this bowl, of which there are four, are all united to a single body. The face consists of a double semicircle within which the eyes, nose, and mouth are indicated. Pl. xciv, *c*, shows a similar face in the triangle formed by the pendent lines on the base of the bowl. In the center of pl. xcv, *b*, is a yet more conventionalized



FIG. 105.—Luna Ware bowl with Jaguar pattern; Alta Gracia, Nicaragua. (Diameter,  $9\frac{1}{2}$  in.)

rendering of the same motive. It is worthy of note that the panels dividing the occurrences of the major pattern, in conjunction with the central face, form a Winged-head design.

The Human-head motive is obviously connected with the heads of

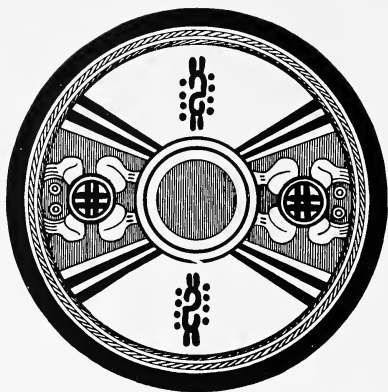


FIG. 106.—Bowl pattern, Ulua valley, Honduras. (After Gordon, 1898.)

the Winged-head motive just considered, for the face of the latter is exactly the same. It is also related to some of the monkey heads, such as pl. xciv, *b*, and it bears a close resemblance to heads on Ulua Valley pottery, of which an example appears in fig. 106.

#### THE MONKEY

The Luna Ware Monkey is a simple pattern which undergoes relatively little variation. An example of the more natural type of rendering is given in pl. xciv, *b*, in which the head, body, limbs,

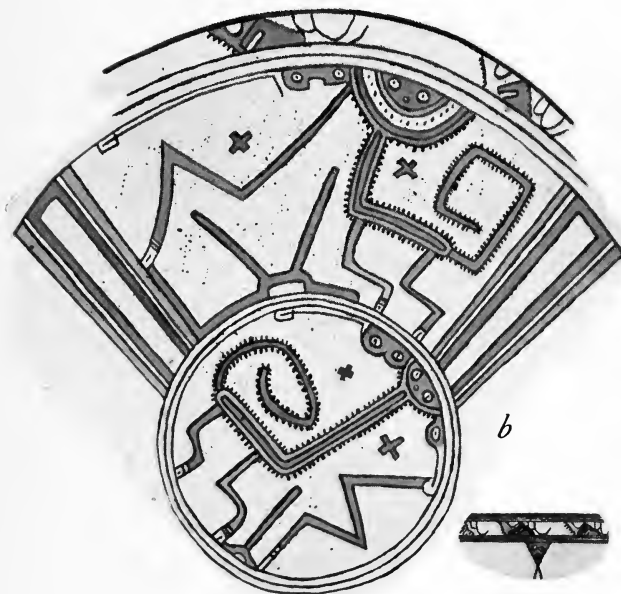
and tail can be easily identified. To the left of the head in the upper panel, and on both sides in the lower, are supplementary heads from which project speech scrolls, an identification made possible by a study of the Nicoya Polychrome Monkey, type A (pl. lx). The long serpentine arm, which zigzags diagonally across the field, is always so represented; the red pattern projecting into the field beneath the arm is not wholly clear, but it apparently represents the legs in the more conventionalized presentations such as pl. xcv, *b*.

In pl. xcv, *b*, the body has become purely geometric, and is rendered by a series of parallel lines. The tail is dissociated from the body and attached to the right border of the panel. The principal head is an oval with an eye in the center and divided by four radii. The supplementary head is also shown with a single eye. The serpentine arm is again evident, and the red motive below it may well represent legs in this example. A new feature is seen in the introduction of an arm to the right of the head. It should be noted that this specimen is painted in the broad-line technic associated with Nicoya Polychrome rather than with Luna Ware. Pl. xciv, *a*, differs but little from the preceding example. The head is essentially similar, although embellished by four U's not seen before. The arm to the right of the head is of interest because it has been provided with two hands.

The Luna Ware Monkey is commonly displayed on the inner rims



*a*



*b*

LUNA WARE: MONKEY PATTERNS. NICARAGUA



and central panels of rather large bowls. However, in northern Guanacaste and even in the Nicoya peninsula it sometimes is found on the pear-shape jars characteristic of that region, of which an example is given in fig. 95, *a*. The pattern on this specimen is executed in the broader Nicoya technic, but otherwise does not differ from Nicaraguan examples.

#### THE JAGUAR

A pattern very similar to the Silhouette Jaguar of the Nicoya Polychrome Ware is found on Luna Ware. A comparison of the design of fig. 105 with that of pl. XLII, *b*, will establish this connection. Spinden (1917, fig. 62) has worked out a series of the variants of this motive on Luna Ware, which he has called a crocodile motive (see page 143). The changes that take place are similar to those discussed above, and there is no need of repetition here. An example of the more conventionalized forms is given in pl. LXXXVIII, *l*. It is noteworthy that the black background so often associated with this motive in Nicoya is absent in almost all Luna Ware examples.

#### GEOMETRIC DESIGNS

As in the case of Nicoya Polychrome Ware, the Luna Ware vessels usually have minor patterns of a geometric character accompanying the major motive. These minor patterns probably are of remote zoöomorphic ancestry, and some day may be traced to their source, but this cannot be determined with the material now available.

#### RED-LINE PATTERNS

The bowl illustrated in pl. LXXXVIII, *m*, is embellished with a modeled face of the type already described, on each side of which are panels decorated with a design painted in red. This pattern consists of a series of irregular parallel lines, some of which have been joined by perpendicular lines. A dot is introduced in the smaller panels thus formed, each of which suggests an eye. A similar type of design is presented in *p*, in the center of which is an eye. It is executed solely in red paint.

Decoration in red paint is a feature of a Highland Ware considered later. The designs are derived for the greater part from the alligator, and are unrelated to the Luna Ware patterns. The Red-line Nicoya Polychrome vessels are also different.

## LOOPED-LINE PATTERNS

A group of pottery discussed below under the title Hanging-line Ware (pl. xcix) is distinguished by perpendicular lines pendent from an encircling band. On Luna Ware bowls a somewhat similar concept occurs, differing in that the ends of these lines are joined, thus forming loops in the manner shown in pl. xcv, *a*. While a pattern consisting solely of simple black lines is not rare, more often a simple design is introduced where the lines converge on the encircling band. This is clearly illustrated in pl. lxxxviii, *r*, which also shows the way in which such lines cover the bottom of the vessel. This specimen is also of interest because a small hole has been knocked in the bottom of the vessel in order to "kill" it before placing it in the grave.

Among many peoples of the New World, inanimate objects such as baskets or pottery vessels were considered to be alive. Thus North American baskets frequently exhibit a break in an encircling pattern, made in order to allow the passage of the spirit of the basket. Pottery was similarly thought to be animate, and, in order to render it fit for the use of the dead in the spirit world, it was necessary that the pot should also be dead. This was accomplished in three ways: (1) the vessel was broken to bits in the grave, (2) a small hole was knocked in the bottom before placing the vessel in the grave, (3) miniature pottery, which represented the souls of the larger vessels, was deposited with the body. The first of these methods was practised to the exclusion of all others at certain sites such as Curridabat. The second, of which the bowl shown in pl. lxxxviii, *r*, is an example, occurs rarely and sporadically in all wares. Miniature pots (pl. cxxxii, *a*) also are found in this region, although their use in this connection is not established. In general, however, special preparation of the vessels accompanying the deceased was not considered necessary, as is testified by the large number of complete pieces encountered.

## THE STEP SCROLL

The Luna Ware step scroll is characteristically rendered, as shown in fig. 97, *b*. In Nicoya the steps are boldly outlined, but in this specimen they are merely suggested by a series of small scallops. Moreover, an eye is introduced in the center of each red element. The rim of pl. xciv, *b*, illustrates another form of this motive,



LUNA WARE. NICARAGUA

DIAMETER OF *a*, 7 IN.



marked by a series of adjacent loops. Pl. LXXXVIII, *o*, and fig. 105 show degenerate forms of this type.

From these examples it is apparent that the step scroll often lost its character in Luna Ware, for it is nowhere seen with the sharp outlines of the Nicoya Polychrome step scrolls. A further stage of Luna Ware degeneration is shown in the lower zone of fig. 101, in which the scalloped lines are retained (somewhat in the manner of the outer rim of pl. xc), while the interlocking feature has become two series of concentric semicircles, between which are small "eyes". Pl. xcv, *a*, is the same notion, but further removed from the original form. The scalloped line still persists, though diminished in size. The whole pattern is now less crowded and the "eye" is much more obvious.

#### INTERLOCKING L's

A design composed of interlocking L's attached to parallel lines has been seen in the Nicoya Polychrome Ware (fig. 80, *a*). It is also found on Luna Ware vessels (pl. xciv, *a*), where it differs from the Nicoya type in that the alternate elements have been reduced to a simple line.

#### THE T MOTIVE

Fig. 97, *b*, presents a motive resembling a series of T's flanked by parallel lines and blocked off from each other by red panels. This is a characteristic Luna Ware pattern, occasionally found also on Nicoya Polychrome Ware vessels.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

A few other geometric patterns occur sporadically, among which the fret (pl. xcv, *b*) should be mentioned. Series of red dots on a narrow white or orange field bounded by black lines (pl. xciii, *b*) are characteristic of pottery from the islands of Lake Nicaragua in general and of Luna Ware in particular.

## CHAPTER X

### INTERMEDIATE WARES

THE pottery so far discussed has depended for embellishment primarily on painting, and may be called the Polychrome group. Later we shall consider a class of ceramics decorated by incising, which we class as Monochrome Wares. First, however, we must survey an intermediate series which is adorned by both painting and incising.

#### I—MANAGUA WARE

A small and relatively simple ceramic group is found in the Managua-Masaya region, i.e. in the triangular area bounded by the two great lakes of Nicaragua and the Pacific ocean. The most character-



FIG. 107.—Managua Ware, Managua, Nicaragua. (Diameter, 12 in.)

istic feature is the shape, which is invariably a tripod bowl with a flat floor, slightly flaring sides, and solid legs. The method of attaching the legs is shown in fig. 107. The paste offers no peculiarities and the slip is similar to Nicoya Polychrome Ware except that it is a little darker. Colors are two in number: black

for outlines and red for filling. The vessels of this ware are embellished in two technics: painting and incising. The former is often employed to the exclusion of the latter, and the only field used for incised design is the flat floor of the vessel.

Managua Ware offers a very close parallel to the Aztec and Maya tripod bowls usually known as "pepper-graters," and which have an identical shape and similarly placed rough incised patterns, which are said to have served for grinding peppers. Bowls with floors thus incised are found at Recuay in Peru. The Aztec vessels are of the peculiar dull-orange tone so characteristic of the pottery of the

Mexican plateau during the Aztec epoch, and they are decorated on the rims with the black-line patterns which mark the pottery of that region.

Subclassification of Managua Ware is based on the following scheme:

- |                      |   |   |
|----------------------|---|---|
| 1. Painted patterns  | { | Plumed Serpent.<br>Plumed Bird heads.<br>Geometric. |
| 2. Incised patterns. |   |   |

#### PAINTED PATTERNS

##### THE PLUMED SERPENT

In discussing Nicoya Polychrome Ware, a special aspect of the Plumed Serpent, type G, was presented, which was distinguished by the presence of merely the head and several long plumes (pl. LVII, *b*) and which was connected with late representations of this monster in the art of Mexico. A similar concept appears in Managua Ware, of which examples are shown in fig. 108, *b*, *c*. In each of these rim patterns a head faces the left, with jaws thrown open in a manner more suggestive of Mayan than of Nicaraguan or Costa Rican art, although the position is found in a less exaggerated form on certain Luna Ware vessels (pl. LXXXIX, *a*). The angle of the upper jaws is cut off by parallel lines, thus forming the eye of which the pupil is omitted, and above which are placed the head plumes. To the right of the head is a small triangular body, to which two long plumes are attached.

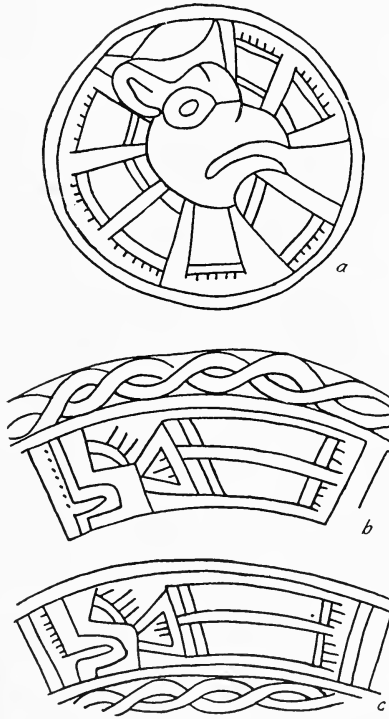


FIG. 108. — Managua Ware, Masaya, Nicaragua. (After Sapper, 1899.)

## THE PLUMED BIRD HEAD

An epitome of Managua Ware is seen in fig. 109, *c*, which represents the exterior of one of two vessels, identical except for the decorations on the floor of the bowl. The floor pattern of one is painted (*a*) and that of the other is incised (*b*). The exterior and interior rim design consists of a bird head to which are attached

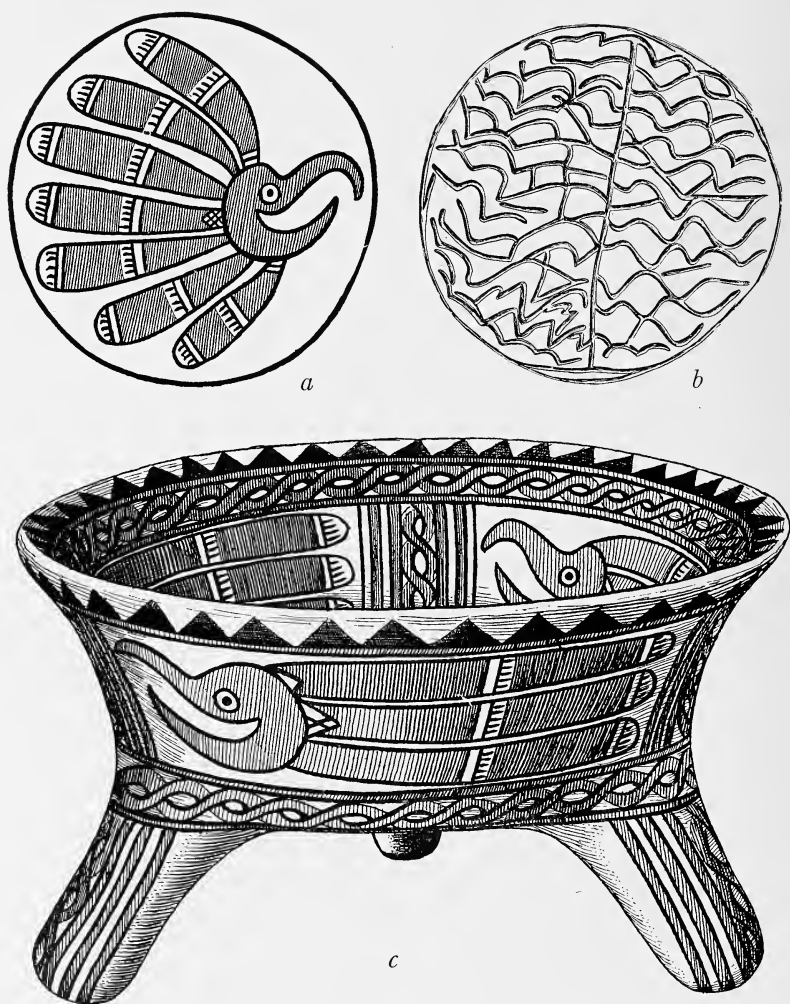


FIG. 109.—Managua Ware, Quiscome, Nicaragua. (Diameter, 8 in.)



NANDAIME WARE

*a*—FILADELFIA, COSTA RICA (HEIGHT, 7 IN.). *b*, *c*—NANDAIME, NICARAGUA (DIAMETER, 9 IN. AND 13 IN.)



three long plumes, a motive which has a wide distribution to the north.

Fig. 109, *a*, shows the adaptation of this motive to the circular floor of the vessel. This result is obtained by increasing the number of plumes from three to seven, thus cutting down the blank space. In fig. 108, *a*, the plumes, still seven in number, completely encircle the head.

#### GEOMETRIC PATTERNS

The only major geometric pattern known to the writer is the star-like arrangement seen in fig. 110. This is copied from twin vessels of the characteristic Managua Ware shape. Minor geometric patterns are the guilloche (fig. 109, *c*) and various simple frets such as appear on the rim and legs of the vessel pictured in fig. 107.

#### INCISED DESIGNS

As in the case of the Aztec "pepper-graters," incised patterns are found only on the floors of bowls, and were executed while the clay was still plastic, thus forming a slight elevation on each side of the depressed line. This is exemplified in pl. xcvii, *f*, the pattern of which is derived from the bird feather (fig. 35), and is found in both Nicoya and Highland Polychrome Wares.

Fig. 109, *b*, gives a less formal incised pattern and one more characteristic of the ware than the preceding. Here again the lines were cut before the clay was dry.

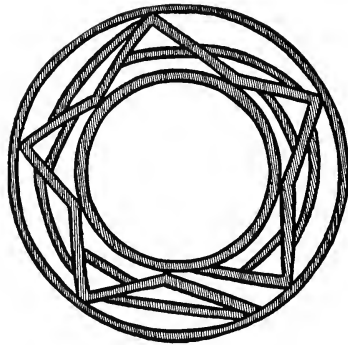


FIG. 110.—Managua Ware: Pattern from twin bowls, Quiscome, Nicaragua. (Diameter, 5.5 in.)

## II—NANDAIME WARE

Excavations conducted by Flint near the town of Nandaime in Nicaragua produced ceramic remains the majority of which were of a special type to which we have given the name "Nandaime Ware". The greater number of these vessels come from the mainland in Nicaragua. However, examples occur occasionally in the islands of Lake Nicaragua and southward in Costa Rica as far as the northern

shores of the Gulf of Nicoya. Local subtypes ultimately may be distinguished, but such segregation is not warranted on the basis of the small amount of material now available.

#### SHAPES

There are two characteristic shapes: (1) a deep bowl, usually with a slightly recurved rim (pl. *xcvii*, *c*, and fig. 112, *b*), and (2) shallow bowls with bulbous tripod legs (fig. 111). Other forms were borrowed from neighboring ceramic types, notably the Nicoya pear-shape vessel and the Mayan cylindrical tripod jar.

#### CLAY AND FIRING

The clay is of uniform quality, and contains sand and small pebbles. Firing was not carried to a high temperature, and there is usually a dark band in the center of the wall of the vessel.

#### SLIP

Nandaimé Ware is distinguished primarily by a red slip. This is usually very thin, hardly more than a wash. In some specimens the red slip is covered by a thin white wash on the greater part of the field for painted decoration (pl. *xcviii*, *b*, *c*), which radically alters the general appearance, though not the actual character of the slip. On the incised shallow bowls of this ware, just as in Managua Ware, the slip does not cover the floor when it is occupied by incised designs.

#### COLORS

The standard colors for painted designs are black and white. Orange is used occasionally. When the pattern occurs on a white wash, it is painted in black, rarely with a red filling.

#### DECORATION

Nandaimé Ware vessels are decorated in three technics: (1) modeling, (2) painting, (3) incising. Modeled decoration is found in combination with both incised and painted designs, but incised and painted patterns do not occur on the same vessel. Subclassification has been made on the basis of design as follows:



NANDAIME AND MANAGUA WARE  
a-c, g—NANDAIME, NICARAGUA. f—MANAGUA, NICARAGUA



- |      |                     |  |  |
|------|---------------------|--|--|
| I.   | Modeled decoration  | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Modeled human faces.} \\ \text{Animal heads.} \\ \text{Parallel lines.} \end{array} \right.$ |  |
| II.  | Painted decoration  |  | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Human figure.} \\ \text{Monkey.} \\ \text{Geometric.} \end{array} \right.$ |
| III. | Incised decoration. |  |  |

## MODELED DECORATION

## HUMAN FACES

Modeled human faces on Luna Ware and Nicoya Polychrome Ware have already been discussed. They are also found on Nandaime Ware vessels, both on the sides and on the tripod legs. They may be subclassified on the basis of on what part of the vessel they occur, or according to the presence or absence of painted supplementary patterns.

Plate xcvi, *a*, shows a jar with a modeled face, accompanied with painted designs. The vessel has a red slip, but this has been covered with white paint on the area occupied by the face. This white field is outlined in black paint. The eyes, mouth, and ear-plugs have been modeled in relief, and a simple chevron pattern is painted on the face. A geometric design encircles the shoulder of the jar.

Pl. xcvi, *c*, is an example of the face without painted additions. As in the preceding specimen the face is separated from the rest of the vessel by a small white field, and the eyes, mouth, and nose are seen in relief. The characteristic depression below the lip of this bowl is filled with white paint. In *b* of the same plate a similar form of face is shown on the tripod legs. The red slip on this bowl was not applied to the base and legs, and the dividing line is distinctly shown in the illustration. In fig. 111 a cruder form of face appears



FIG. 111.—Nandaime Ware, Nicaragua. (Diameter, 5.5 in.)

on the leg of the vessel. The nose is raised in relief, the eyes are formed by two slits, and the mouth is omitted.

#### ANIMAL HEADS

Pl. xcvi, *a*, illustrates a bird effigy jar. The body of the vessel roughly outlines the body of the bird, the head projects from one end, and the wings are indicated by raised lines. Fig. 112, *a*, is a cylindrical tripod jar with animal heads projecting from opposite sides, a type distinctly of Mayan origin. This form has previously been discussed in the Nicoya Polychrome Ware (pl. lxix). The Mayan prototype is found in greatest numbers in the Ulua valley (fig. 66) and in Salvador.

#### PARALLEL LINES

Many vessels of this ware are decorated by parallel lines in slight relief on the outer surface. Pl. xcvi, *c*, furnishes an example of this treatment which forms a simple fret with a raised boss at each end. Fig. 112, *b*, has four such bands, two on the underbody and two flanking the broad black band.

#### PAINTED DECORATION

##### THE HUMAN FIGURE

Fig. 112, *a*, exhibits a peculiar painted pattern which is probably a human figure. At the top is a circle representing the head, to the

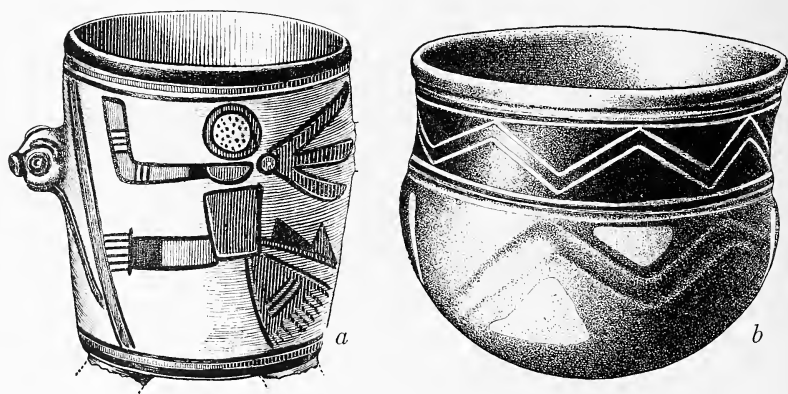


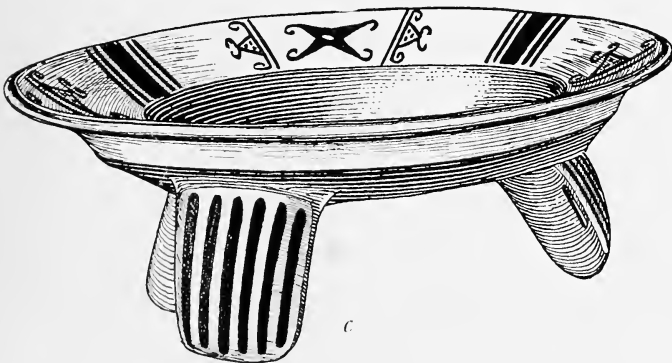
FIG. 112.—Nandaime Ware, Nandaime, Nicaragua. (Height of *a*, 7.5 in.; of *b*, 5 in.)



a



b



c

NANDAIME WARE. NANDAIME, NICARAGUA



right of which are three long plumes, and to the left an arm. Below the head is a rectangular body, to the left of which is a second arm (or leg) grasping a spear or pole. Beneath and slightly to the right is a triangular panel which presumably is a leg. This pattern is not closely related to any other in this region, but it does appear to be distantly connected with Nicoya Polychrome representations of the Man-and-Jaguar pattern (pl. xxxii).

#### THE MONKEY

The commonest painted zoömorphie pattern on Nandaime Ware represents the monkey in the aspect described under Nicoya Polychrome Ware as type D (pl. lxvii), and which was shown to be closely akin to the monkey of Mayan and Mexican art. In the former it has been encountered among the ceramic remains from Copan and therefore dates back to the sixth century A. D. A Nandaime Ware example is shown in pl. xcvi, *a*, which offers no difference from the type already described. Fig. *b* of the same plate is probably the same animal, reduced to a head and two arms.

#### GEOMETRIC PATTERNS

The majority of Nandaime Ware designs are of geometric character. Pl. xcvi, *c*, *d*, show examples of the same design, one from Costa Rica and one Nicaragua. The pattern is found on Nicoya Geometric bowls. Pl. xcvi, *b*, is a small vessel decorated with wavy lines painted in orange and black upon the usual red slip.



FIG. 113.—Nandaime Ware incised tripod plates. *a*, Nandaime, Nicaragua (diameter, 9.75 in.); *b*, Nindirí, Nicaragua (diameter, 6 in.).

Pl. xcvi, *c*, is unusual both in shape and in design. The general color scheme and provenience place it definitely in the Nandaime Ware group. Fig. 112, *b*, gives an interesting combination of painted and modeled design consisting of parallel zigzags.

#### INCISED DECORATION

Incised design is found solely on the upper surface of shallow tripod bowls (fig. 113). While the inner rim is covered with the usual red slip, the floor of the vessel, which is the field for incised designs, is not colored. The designs themselves are simple, consisting of dotted concentric circles or dotted circles enclosing a star. The incisions were made while the clay was still plastic, thus leaving rough edges in the manner already seen in Managua Ware (pl. xcvi, *f*),

and again suggesting the Aztec "pepper-grater" bowls. The shape of the Nandaime Ware examples, however, strongly recalls a class of bowls found on the Pacific coast of Colombia in the Tumaco region, often decorated in negative painting, but which sometimes have a red slip exactly like Nandaime Ware.



*a*



*b*

FIG. 114.—Nicoya Black-line Ware. *a*, Tola, Nicaragua (diameter, 6.25 in.); *b*, Costa Rica (height, 5.5 in.).

### III—NICOYA BLACK-LINE WARE

#### DISTRIBUTION AND CHARACTER

Nicoya Black-line Ware is distinguished by characteristic slip and shapes, and by patterns which are normally painted in black. In Managua Ware and Nandaime Ware we dis-



NICOYA BLACK-LINE WARE  
b—SAN ANTONIO DE NICOYA, COSTA RICA; others—COSTA RICA



cussed pottery types which pertain primarily to Nicaragua, although examples occur in some numbers in the Nicoya peninsula. The group now under discussion is found chiefly in the Nicoya peninsula, although specimens are found also in Nicaragua. The distribution makes it quite probable that for the greater part these vessels are the handiwork of the Corobici.

The clay is usually that of the Orange-Brown Ware described later. This is covered by a thin red slip or wash. Rarely a white slip like Nicoya Polychrome Ware occurs, or else the vessel is merely burnished.

The range of variation in form is illustrated in pls. xcix and c, and fig. 116. It will be seen that the common shapes are globular jars with constricted orifices, and bowls set on short legs. Effigy vessels (pl. xcix, *c*, *f*) are scarce, and tend toward Monochrome rather than Polychrome types (pl. cix, *a*, and fig. 131). The human face is seen sometimes on the side of bowls in the style associated with Polychrome pottery (fig. 114, *b*), but rarely emphasized by modeling. Small heads also are placed on the spouts of chocolate pots (pl. xcix, *b*) in a manner recalling the Monochrome fashion (pl. cv, *b*). Annular bases and zoöomorphic tripod legs do not occur.

Painted decoration is sometimes borrowed from Nicoya Polychrome Ware. Thus the pattern in pl. xcix, *a*, is clearly the same as that in fig. 70, which we have shown was borrowed from Chiriqui and

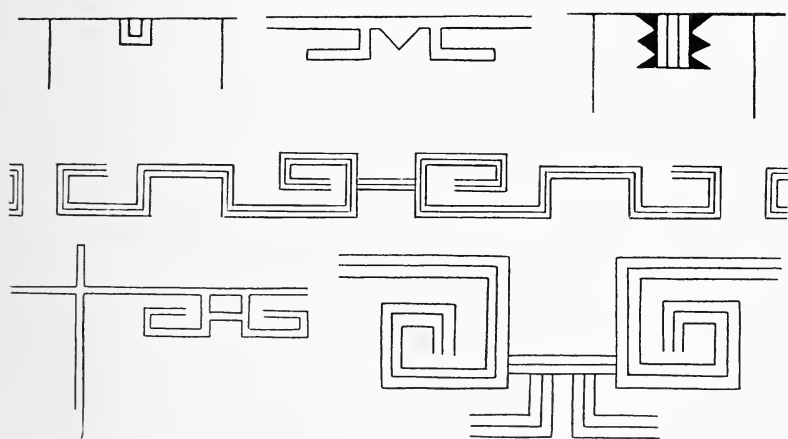


FIG. 115.—Nicoya Black-line Ware: Alligator patterns, Nicoya peninsula, Costa Rica.

represents the scale markings of the alligator. Pl. xcix, *b*, shows a geometric motive resembling fig. 80, *b*, both being related to patterns of the Highland area (pl. clv) and of Chiriqui. However, the majority of painted patterns are not borrowed but pertain primarily to this group.

#### THE GUILLOCHE

The use of the guilloche is illustrated in pl. xcix, *e*, and fig. 114, *b*. In other wares this is used as a minor decorative motive, but here is the only pattern seen. Normally it is placed between several rows of encircling bands. The guilloche itself is rendered in either an angular or a curvilinear style, and rarely includes a series of "eyes" like the Nicoya Polychrome examples (pl. xxiii, *a*).

#### THE HANGING-LINE MOTIVE

The design most typical of Nicoya Black-line Ware consists of groups of parallel lines pendent from the lowest encircling band on

the body of the vessel, with which there is often associated a degenerate variation of the Chiriqui Alligator pattern. The simplest class of hanging-line appears in pl. xcix, *c*, *f*, consisting of no more than groups of three and four parallel lines. In *d* the length has been greatly reduced, while in fig. 116, *b*, and pl. c, *b*, the number has been greatly increased. The latter specimen is out of group because it has the slip and color of Nicoya Polychrome Ware, while it is decorated in the fashion of Nicoya Black-line Ware.

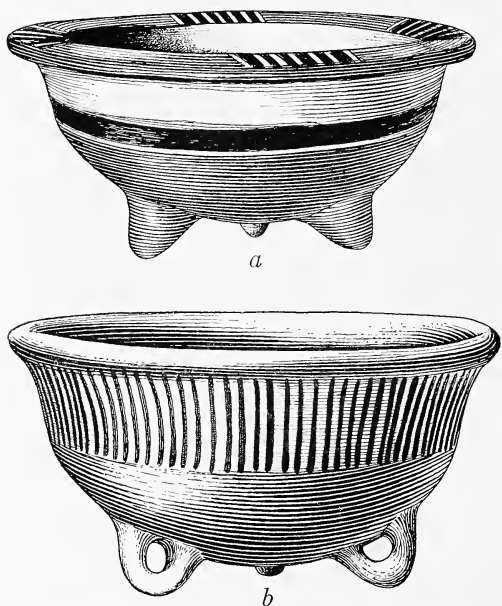


FIG. 116.—Nicoya Black-line Ware, Costa Rica.  
(Diameter of *a*, 4.5 in.; of *b*, 10 in.)



*a*



*b*



*c*



*d*

NICOYA BLACK-LINE WARE

*a, b*—FILADELFA, COSTA RICA. *c, d*—SARDINAL, COSTA RICA



In *a* of the same plate the outer flanking lines are made very much wider, as is quite commonly done.

#### ALLIGATOR MOTIVE

The Alligator motive appears in Black-line Ware in the form of a very much conventionalized derivative before discussed (see fig. 73). In reality the frets of such pieces as pl. c, *a* and *c*, are taken from the legs of patterns like fig. 72, *d*, while the body of the alligator has been totally eliminated. A series of these patterns in fig. 115 exhibits parallel development to this motive on Nicoya Polychrome Ware.

#### EL VIEJO STYLE

Lehmann (1910) describes a specialized type of Nicoya Black-line Ware which he has named from a locality where it is frequently found. The patterns on these vessels are those which have been described, painted in black lines flanked by white (pl. c, *c*). A bowl type very characteristic of this style is illustrated in fig. 116, *a*. It will be observed that the outer walls are adorned with two white bands and a black band; the broad flat lip has black panels decorated with white lines.

Lehmann has suggested that this style of vessel should be attributed to the Corobici. This is quite possible. The Corobici formerly came into direct contact with the Highland area along its northern frontier. In pl. CLXVII we show very similar bowls found in that region.









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